

GOIN' HOME

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GOIN' HOME



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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GOIN' HOME

BY

RANSOM RIDEOUT

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON · NEW YORK · TORONTO

1928

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BY RANSOM RIDEOUT

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GOIN' HOME

A Play in Three Acts

BY

RANSOM RIDEOUT

WITHDRAWN

49567

CHARACTERS

AS PRESENTED BY BROCK PEMBERTON IN NEW YORK
(IN ORDER OF THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE)

SIM	.....	U. S. Military Police	JOHN IRWIN
BILL	.....		RALPH CULLINAN
LISE, proprietress of the café	.....	BARBARA BULGAKOV	
SERGENT DURANT	.....	ARVID PAULSON	
CAPORAL PICOT	.....	ALEXANDER ZAROUBINE	
COMMANDANT JUNESTE	.....	GEORGES RENAVENT	
ISRAEL DU BOIS, husband of Lise	.....	RICHARD HALE	
TOM	.....	Negro Soldiers	BREVARD BURNETT
LUKE	.....		LEO BAILEY
MAJOR EDWARD POWELL of the A.E.F.	.....	RUSSELL HICKS	
SAMBA SAAR, a Senegalese Soldier	.....	CLARENCE REDD	
JAKE	.....	Negro Soldiers	SEIFFERT C. PYLE
BILL	.....		F. BARCLAY TRIGG
SPUDS	.....		FERDINAND J. ACCOOE
SLICK	.....		J. WILLIAM MAXWELL
WALT	.....		FREDERICK D. MCCOY
MOSE	.....		CHARLES H. BROWN
CHUCK	.....		CHARLES BENJAMIN
BANJO EPH	.....		FRED H. JENNINGS
BUCK	.....		RAY GILES
CHIP	.....		SNIPPY MASON
JIM, a Deserter	.....		THOMAS MOSELEY

*The scene is a café in a French seaport town
after the signing of the Versailles Treaty*

ACT I: Interior of Lise's Café. Early afternoon

ACT II: The same. That night

ACT III: The same. Immediately afterward

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ACT I

The scene is the interior of a café in a French seaport. A bar stands in one corner. Tables and chairs are placed about. Bottles and glasses are on bar and on shelves behind bar. When the curtain rises, the café is empty.

SLIM AND BILL [*singing off*].

Mademoiselle from Armentieres
Parley-vous!
Mademoiselle from Armentieres
Parley-vous!
Mademoiselle from Armentieres
Ain't slept alone for forty years
Hinky-dinky-par-ley-vous!

SLIM. Who won the war, Bill?

BILL. M.P.'s! [Bill and Slim enter street door. They look about, surprised.]

SLIM [*Crossing to table; takes match*]. If this ain't the first time I ever stepped inside of a French saloon an' found it empty.

[*Lise singing off-stage*.]

BILL [*enter*]. It don't give me sore eyes.

SLIM [*sits—lights pipe*]. Me neither. If I ain't sick o' seein' a bunch o' louzy frogs sittin' around on

their pants—you can call me a wall-eyed cootie!
BILL [*looking off*]. Ah! There's mademoiselle!

SLIM. Yuh can't get rid o' them either. They
can smell a dough boy's money before pay-day.

BILL. They sure can love.

SLIM. That's their business. Naturally they're a suc-
cess at it.

BILL [*sits*]. Yep. They have a great system. Cash
money and a quick turn-over.

BILL AND SLIM [*pounding on table*]. Heh—Mademoi-
selle?

LISE [*enters with tray of glasses which she puts on bar*].
, Bonjour, Messieurs!

M.P.'S. Same here. Same here.

LISE. Que voulez-vous, Messieurs?

SLIM. Same old poison—cognac.

LISE. Oui, Monsieur. [*She gets the cognac and takes
it to table.*]

SLIM. What are you thinking of, Bill?

BILL. I ain't thinkin'. I'm goin' home.

SLIM. Well—that's one way o' gettin' there.

BILL. You suppose everything'll be the same when we
get back?

[*Lise returns to bar.*]

SLIM. I don't know. Every time I get a letter from
my dame in Frisco, she moans about the weather.
As if I hadn't had enough weather over here to last
me a lifetime!

BILL. Looks bad. When they get to talkin' about the
weather you can be sure they've got somebody else
under the umbrella.

[*Lise exits.*]

SLIM. You're certainly a cheerful optimist.

BILL. I can afford to be. I ain't tied to no skirt.

SLIM. Bill, I got a hunch when we get back—the folks'll do somethin' handsom' for us—somethin'—

BILL. You ain't lookin' for a statue, are yuh?

SLIM. All kiddin' aside—I mean—

BILL. A good swift kick in the pants an' lucky to get
that—that's what your rotten little burg called
Frisco'll give you.

SLIM [rising threateningly]. Now you keep your mouth off Frisco, hear me? You Montana Mick! I'll pull that fried egg o' yours over your ears! [Pulls cap over Bill's nose.]

BILL [*adjusting cap*]. Push it again! Go on, push it again, you big four-flusher!

SLIM. Well, I didn't come from no jerkwater, hog-raisin', God-forsaken dump like Elsie, Montana!

[*Mimics.*] Elsie! Oh, Elsie!

Ain't that a hell-uv-a name FRENCH SERGEANT [off].
for a he-man town, you Je me demande si Ser-
Hibernian hill-billy! geant du Bois est dans le

BILL [rising]. Why you
Frisco bum!

[French Sergeant and Corporal enter and pause at door.]

SLIM [noting French]. Hold it Bill! Hold it! I smell something. [As they cross.] Here they are—Alphonse and Gaston.

BILL AND SLIM [*sit and sing*]. "We're all Pals Together."

[*Sergeant and Corporal cross with portrait of Marshal Foch.*]

SERGEANT. Voulez-vous couper la ficelle, Corporal.

CORPORAL. Oui, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. Il faut la couper, parce qu'elle est bien solide. Merci!

[*Lise enters with a tray of glasses and goes behind bar.*]

LISE. Bonjour, Messieurs.

CORPORAL. Bonjour, Madame.

SERGEANT. Comment allez-vous, Madame?

LISE. Très bien, Monsieur.

SERGEANT [*unwrapping picture*]. Ne pensez-vous pas que Monsieur du Bois [*Corporal raises picture*] sera fier quand il regardera ce portrait de Foch J'en suis sûr.

[*Slim and Bill stop singing.*]

SLIM [*as Corporal lowers picture*]. Ain't these foreign languages coarse!

BILL. And we came clear

[*Corporal lowers picture to table.*]

SERGEANT. Venez-ici, Madame. Je veux vous

across the ocean to fight
for 'em.

montrer quelque chose.

[*Lise looks at portrait.*]

Regardez-moi ça. Re-
gardez-le!

CORPORAL. C'est chic,
n'est-ce pas?

SLIM. Chatterin' like a
bunch o' monkeys!

BILL. You'd think the
world was comin' to an
end for 'em.

SLIM. Damned if it ain't
a picture o' General
Ooffengoofen—with all
the trimmin's.

LISE. Ah! Quelle jolie
photographie!

BILL. You'd think he
won the war all by him-
self. Must be a present
for somebody.

SERGEANT. Oui. C'est
bien jolie—ne pensez-
vous pas?

SLIM. Du Bois!

LISE. Que faites-vous avec
ce tableau?

BILL. Israel du Bois.

SERGEANT. C'est un ca-
deau pour M. du Bois.

SLIM. That's the name of
that French coon. He
must live here. Wears a

LISE. Pour Israel ?

LISE. Mais pourquoi?

SERGEANT. Pour avoir
sauvé ces enfants l'autre
jour.

blue coat and a croix de guerre. Stopped a runaway team of horses the other day. There they was tearin' down the road hell-bent for election right onto some kids playin' in the street.
[Rises.] Damned if that coon didn't jump right at them hosses' bits and drag 'em to a stop. Some stunt I'm atellin' you for a black man.
[Sits.] Since then these frogs can't seem ter do enough for him.

BILL. Well, I reckon he earned that croix de guerre.

SLIM. Better'n a lot of officers I know. The frogs had ter give croix de guerres to some of our gang ter get 'em out of the country.

BILL. What's he doin'? Livin' here with her? [He pours drink for himself. Slim drinks it. He hides bottle.]

LISE. Ah! Mettez-le au mur. [Corporal takes down guitar. Sergeant hangs picture. Lise admires picture.]

SERGEANT. Ça fait bien dans le café, n'est-ce pas? Monsieur du Bois sera fier de ça. Regardez-moi ça, Madame. Regardez-le! C'est jolie? N'est-ce pas?

SLIM. I wouldn't be surprised at nothin' over here.

[*Slim rises unsteadily and begins to sing.*] "Oh,
the French they are a funny race, Parlee-voo," etc.

[*The Sergeant stoops to fix his puttee. Slim breaks off in the middle of a verse, whips out his gun and points it at the Sergeant.*] I'd like to tickle his tail
with this. [*He waves the gun rather carelessly about,*
much to the consternation of the French. Corporal
rushes up to stop him.]

CORPORAL. Prenez garde, Sergeant! Prenez garde!

SERGEANT. Quel diable d'Américain!

SLIM. Harmony with the allies! [*Points to seats for French.*] Squattez-vous. Have a drink.

[*The Sergeant and Corporal sit. Slim watches them as they start to play cards.*]

MADEMOISELLE. Avez-vous des cartes, Monsieur?

SERGEANT. Oui, Madame, merci!

SLIM [*pouring drinks for French*]. Do they think
they're goin' to have a game of cards with them?

BILL. These frogs play with 32 cards.

SLIM. They ain't men enough to handle a full deck.
[*Slim takes drink away in disgust and joins Bill.*

They play cards.]

COMMANDANT [*Juneste enters. In passing salutes Corporal and Sergeant, who stand at salute.*]. Bonjour,
Lise.

LISE. Bonjour, Commandant Juneste.

COMMANDANT. Ah! Et comment allez-vous, Ma-
dame? Vous avez des roses sur les joues. Vous êtes
charmant comme toujours.

LISE. Quel flatteur!

SLIM [rising]. What's it all about? What's it all about? [He sits again.]

COMMANDANT. Ah, I see we have some American visitors.

SERGEANT [rising and saluting]. Ils sont saouls Mon Commandant—Ils sont saouls!

COMMANDANT. Perhaps out of politeness to them I should speak English, Madame.

SLIM. Say it with flowers.

LISE. You like to talk Engleesh, eh? Monsieur?

COMMANDANT. Ah, yes, I confess it is a weakness of mine. I must confess another weakness also.

LISE [archly]. Yes?

COMMANDANT. That I delight to keep in practice with one who speaks English as charmingly as yourself.

LISE. You are always joking, Monsieur.

COMMANDANT. Well, one must have his little joke, n'est-ce pas? Since the war, that is all we have left in France—our little joke.

LISE. Oui, Monsieur.

COMMANDANT. I came to congratulate your husband for saving those children the other day—Moreover there are some black American soldiers coming. I thought he would be glad to meet some men of his own race, Madame.

LISE. Peut-être! He nevair seem very happy lately, Commandant. Maybe he ees what you call, home-seek, n'est-ce pas?

COMMANDANT. Very possible. [Notes portrait on post.] Ah, I see they have brought the portrait. If Israel returns to America—it will be a happy souvenir of France.

LISE. Always when I ask heem to take me to America, he say "No" or "Maybe some time." [She sighs.] I do not seenk he weel evair go back to America.

CORPORAL AND SERGEANT. Ah! Voilà du Bois! [Enter Israel. *The Corporal and Sergeant rise.*]

SERGEANT. Vous étiez bien brave l'autre jour.

ISRAEL. Ce n'est rien. Et comment allez-vous?

CORPORAL AND SERGEANT. Pas mal. Assez bien, merci.

COMMANDANT. I am very glad to see you. [They meet and salute.] I congratulate you on saving those children the other day. It was a splendid feat.

ISRAEL. Just a couple of horses. Anybody could have stopped 'em.

COMMANDANT. No—not at all! You are a veteran of many battles. It was not for nothing that France awarded you the croix de guerre with palms. In the rescue of those children you added one more palm to that decoration. [Commandant pins decoration on Israel. They shake hands and Commandant points to picture.] They have brought a present for you. It is there on the wall.

ISRAEL. Why, I don't know what to say. I—

COMMANDANT. Remplissez les verres, Camarades. Madame! Sergeant! Caporal! Venez boire à la santé de notre ami, du Bois! [Corporal and Sergeant cross to bar.]

COMMANDANT. A votre santé!

CORPORAL AND SERGEANT. Salut, Camarade! [They drink. Corporal starts to play "Madelon" on guitar.]

SLIM. For God's sake! Are they goin' to sing? [All the French sing "Madelon."]

SLIM [at finish of "Madelon"]. For the love of Mike, Willie, stuff some cotton in my ears. If I hear any more of them frog songs, I'll croak.

[*Israel exits.*]

BILL. Me, too.

SLIM. Let's sing her a—a real song.

[*Lise brings a bottle of wine to Commandant. Israel sends her back to bar with it.*]

ISRAEL. No—I got a good wine for him. [*He exits for wine.*]

BILL [Sings]. Hail! Hail! The gang's all here.
What the—

SLIM. Hell, no.

BILL [sings]. Over there. Over there—

SLIM [rises]. Cease! The war's over. Wasn't this war—to end all war? Wasn't this war to save—to save—what the hell was it to save, Bill?

BILL. Why, it was to save—Prohibition!

SLIM. Put her here, Bill, I didn't think it was in *yuh*.
[*He shakes hands with Bill. Bill starts to sing "Home Sweet Home." Israel enters with bottle of wine.*]

SERGEANT AND CORPORAL. Bravo! Bravo! Encore!

SLIM. Horseradish! You're nothin' but a pair of tin soldiers!

SERGEANT. Quel type!

SLIM. An' I ask you! Who won this war? The Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army or the Y. M. C. A.?

SERGEANT AND CORPORAL [*more loudly than before.*].
Bravo! Bravo!

SLIM [*in total disgust*]. Bravo! Bravo yourself!

Gen'lemen. I salute—the—winner o' the battle of Pâté de fois grass. [He salutes with exaggeration. He turns toward the Commandant.] Napoleon!

BILL. Cut it out, Buddy. That's an officer.

SLIM. The war's over—God help the officers now! I ask you, Mr. Major—who won the war?

COMMANDANT. Would it be too much to say, my friends—the Americans?

SLIM. All the—Americans?

COMMANDANT [smiling genially]. I believe it was—the Military Police.

SLIM. Righto. I salute you. [Slim starts singing "California here I come." He bumps into Corporal, putting hand on Corporal's head. He then returns to Commandant.] Mr. Colonel—I'm—I'm goin' home!

COMMANDANT. I'm glad you're going home. [Slim looks insulted. Realizing the slight.] Since you so desire! I sincerely wish you—bon voyage.

SLIM. Mr. Brigadier I—I apologize—for bein' in this —condition. I'm soused. No hard—feelin's?

COMMANDANT. None at all.

SLIM. General, you're a good sport—I've been a—good soldier.

COMMANDANT. I'm sure you have been.

SLIM. I seen service—in the trenches—before they made me—[He spits on M.P. arm band.] a lousy M.P. Now I wanna go home—to my little queen in Frisco, Sweet? And the drunker I am—the sweeter she looks! [He turns to Bill.] Home, James—take me home. Before that cross-eyed son-of-a-shave-tail-of-a-second-Louie sees me. [Slim starts, bump-

ing into Corporal, then returns to Commandant again.] Mr. Admiral Foch—

COMMANDANT. At your service.

SIM. There's just one thing more—I got—to say.
When you have another—little—war—over here an'
I'm re-requested—to volunteer—I'll be flatfooted—
Pigeon breasted—deaf—dumb an'—cuckoo. [Goes
toward door. Bill catches hold of him for support.]
BILL. If they hold the next war in Central Park, I
won't go. Who won the war?

COMMANDANT. Au revoir!

BILL. The M.P.'s.

[They exit singing "Home Sweet Home."]

SERGEANT AND CORPORAL. Bravo!

COMMANDANT. Poor boys, I suppose if I was as homesick as they are I'd be drunk too.

ISRAEL. I sure do! Sometimes I'm so homesick I'd just like to step out o' that door—and find myself back in New Orleans.

COMMANDANT. I used to feel that way when I lived in England. We call it être dépayssé. One feels exiled.

SERGEANT. Carot!

ISRAEL. I didn't use to feel so bad before the Armistice. But now—when everybody's goin' home—seems like I just can't help goin' too.

COMMANDANT. Then why do you not go?

LISE. Coupé! [Israel looks at her.]

ISRAEL. Why I—

LISE. Vous avez gagné!

ISRAEL. I—I just can't.

COMMANDANT [*Rises—Israel then rises.*] By the way.

I'm expecting a battalion of American negro troops today. We are preparing quarters for them. I thought you would be interested.

ISRAEL. I certainly would. I haven't seen black boys from home for four years.

LISE. Cinq francs, Messieurs.

[*Sergeant and Corporal pay her.*]

COMMANDANT. Well—I must be going! [*Reaches for money to pay for wine.*]

ISRAEL. No—no please—not this time!

[*Commandant bows.*]

COMMANDANT. Thanks! Au revoir, Monsieur. Sergeant, suivez-moi!

ISRAEL. Au revoir, mon Commandant.

COMMANDANT. Au revoir, Lise!

LISE. Au revoir, Monsieur. [*Exit Commandant, Sergeant and Corporal. Song "Home Sweet Home" off-stage. Israel follows the Commandant to the door and stands gazing outside.*] You have nosing to do een zis café, Monsieur du Bois? You weesh me to do all ze work myself? [*Picks up glasses and takes them to bar.*]

ISRAEL. I'm tired, Lise. [*Closes door.*]

LISE. And Lise ees tired, too. Tired she ever marry herself to you.

ISRAEL. Please—Lise. Don't talk to me like that—now. I feel powerful bad.

LISE [*goes to Israel*]. I don't understand. Always before you work so hard. But now—what ees zee matter wiz you?

ISRAEL. I don't know.

LISE. You have what we call mal de pays. You are homeseek, n'est-ce pas?

ISRAEL. I don't know.

LISE. Maybe you like to go home? Back to zee United States?

ISRAEL. I'd like to go back.

LISE. You are tired of Lise?

ISRAEL. No, Lise. I couldn't be happy without you.

LISE. Zen why do you not take me to New Orleans?

ISRAEL. We can't go—now.

LISE. Maybe next year we can go?

ISRAEL. Yes. Maybe.

LISE. You are not happy wiz me.

ISRAEL [follows Lise]. Of course I am—honey!

LISE. Don't tell me zat, Chérie. I was not born yesterday.

ISRAEL. Oh, Lise, I couldn't be happy without you.

LISE. Zen why don't you take me to your beeg beautiful château and gardens and servants and automobiles. I could live like a queen zere.

ISRAEL [turns away]. I can't do it.

LISE. For why can't you?

ISRAEL. You'd cry your little heart out. [Singing "Long Long Trail" in distance.]

LISE. Always you say can't—can't!

ISRAEL [sitting on table]. People are different over there. They don't even think like you French folks.

LISE. Maybe—you keel somebody, hein? Maybe you are afraid of zee police Américains?

ISRAEL. No, not that!

LISE. Maybe you have een New Orleans—one little

white lady more pretty zan Lise? She wait for you—
après la guerre?

ISRAEL. No.

LISE. Maybe you do not want your very rich friends
to know you marry yourself to a woman who keeps
a café, hein? You are ashamed of Lise? [She exits.]

ISRAEL. Ashamed of you? Why—I'd walk with you
along the streets of Paradise.

LISE. Mon dieu! I cannot understand.

ISRAEL. Can't you be happy here? We have friends—
this little café! It is about the only home we can
have together in this world.

LISE [enters carrying a water pitcher]. Togezzer! Zat
ees eet. You keep me here een zis leetle café, while
you have somebody else wiz you een your Paradise.
You are ashamed of Lise! But I weel find out who
ees in your Paradise, Monsieur. Paradise—zut!
[Exits upstairs to bedroom.]

[Singing coming nearer, swells into a mighty chorus.
"There's a Long, Long Trail Awinding, Into the
Land of my Dreams." It is a passing Battalion of
American Negroes on the long trek home. Deep
emotion stifles Israel.]

ISRAEL [rushing to door. Dogs barking]. Lise! Lise!
The Americans are here! Come quick!

LISE. Je n'ai pas de temps!

ISRAEL. It's the flag! The American flag! [He sa-
lutes—the flag passes. The singing subsides but the
sound of marching feet continues. Israel waves his
fatigue cap.]

VOICE [off-stage]. If here ain't a Spade! Way over
here.

[Cheer off-stage.]

ISRAEL. What's your outfit, Black Boys?

VOICE [off-stage]. Fightin' Nine-second, French nigger!

ISRAEL. Where you all goin'?

VOICE [off-stage]. Whar yu tink we's gwine, black frog? Ain' de wah ovah in dis town?

VOICE [off-stage]. We's all gwine home! Dat's w'ut!

SEVERAL VOICES [off-stage]. Home! Back home!

Ole U. S. A.! New Yawk! Geo'gia! Lou'siana!
Bummin'ham!

ISRAEL. Any you boys from New Orleans?

SEVERAL VOICES [off-stage]. Hyar! Hyar! Hyar!

VOICE [off-stage]. Yu's in de wrong man's ahmy, nigger! Ain' de ole U. S. good 'nuff fo' yu?

VOICE [off-stage]. Better come 'long, parley-voo nigger! Git on de band wagon!

VOICE [off-stage]. We's all gwine home—to die no mo'.

VOICE [off-stage]. Ah, we down heated?

VOICES [off-stage]. No! No! No!

FRENCH VOICE. Vive les Americans!

VOICE [off-stage]. Yu said a mouthful, Froggy!

ISRAEL. I'm with you, Big Boys!

[The singing recommences boisterously: "There's a Long, Long Trail Awindin'!" It dies away. Israel waves his cap once more. Lise enters from bedroom.]

LISE. Allez à la blanchisserie, vite! Tell Madame I will pay her to-morrow.

ISRAEL. All right, Chérie. Anything else while I'm there?

[Tom and Luke enter door swiftly and furtively. They

peep out of the door, close it. When they turn about, Israel faces them.]

TOM. Holy jumpin' ef heah ain' one o' dem French black snakes.

LUKE. Watch out he don' rap hisself roun' yo neck, Tom.

ISRAEL. Well, Big Boys! I am sure glad to see you. Come in an' make yourselves to home.

TOM. For Christ's sake, nigger, we'en did yu all go A. W. O. L.?

ISRAEL [*leading them to bar*]. A. W. O. L.? What's that?

LUKE. Jes' a perlite way o' axin' yu w'en yu deserted from de ahmy. [*Tom and Luke take off equipment.*]

ISRAEL. I joined the French Army way back in 1914.

TOM. Yu must o' been lookin' fo' trouble powerfu' bad.

ISRAEL. What'll it be, Boys? Little old benedictine?

TOM. Benedictine'll do. Make dat bottle trot. We gotta git a move on. Gotta shake our hoofs. Reckon a l'il drink'll fix our so'e feet. Huh, Luke?

LUKE. Yu knows me, Tom. W'en Ah wants a drink —Ah straggles.

ISRAEL [*Lise takes a bottle and some glasses from the shelf. Israel offers drinks*]. Big Boys, where'd you come from?

TOM. Bettah ax us whar we's gwine. Ain' de wah ovah? New Yawk's my home town. Luke heah, he don' belong nowhar in particular.

LISE. Hurry. Allez voir la blanchisseuse.

ISRAEL. I'm on a little errand, boys. But I'll be back

soon. Make yourselves to home. [Exit *Israel*.]
TOM. Did he say wife?

LUKE. Dat's what he did.

TOM. Well what d' you know about dat? Ain't Ah tells yu bein' in France has been a real ejjumcashum to me?

LUKE. Jes' nuff ejjicashum to git yu hanged.

TOM. Luke—yu sho nobody seen us'ns fade away?

LUKE. I'll 'vestigate. [Crosses to door, and peeps out. Meanwhile Tom crosses with benedictine bottle.]

TOM. Like as not Maja Powell sneakin' roun' fer a drink hisself. [He drains benedictine bottle.]

LUKE. No suh. All I sees is de tail end o' de precesshun.

TOM. And when you turns 'round yu's goin' to see de tail end o' dis bottle.

LUKE. Where's that likker, nigger!

TOM [rubbing his stomach]. Don' yu heah it purrin'?

LUKE. Who's gwine pay fo dat likker?

TOM. Nobody's gwine pay. Don' dese yeah French folks owe us somethin'? Yo don' 'spec we come way over heah to fight de wah fo nothin'? Now ef yu still hankers for a drink—git yo'self a bottle an' cha'ge it to de wah.

LUKE. Say, Ma'amzelle, us'ns gwine make camp ter-night udder side o' town. Ef yu gibs me a big shot o' dat likker, ah'll bring some boys down heah ter-night'll drink yo place dry.

[Lise crosses with cognac and glasses.]

LISE. I suppose you Américains want to go home very much?

TOM. Ax me ef Ah wants ter go to hebbien. But sense Ah been in France Ah's changed ma min' 'bout sumpin'.

LUKE. Yu has?

TOM. Ah has.

LUKE. Yu got yo min' on hind side afo'.

TOM. Bein' in France has been a real ejjumcashum to me. Ah seen tings Ah nebber seen befo'. Ah seen white an' black—all mixed up. And Boy! W'en Ah gits back to Harlem—

LISE. What is this your Harlem, Monsieur?

TOM. Dat's whar Ah live.

LISE. But yu said yu lived in New York?

TOM. Ah does. Ah lives in bofe places all t'once.

LISE [*laughing*]. Both places all at once?

TOM. Yu see, lady, w'en dey named dat town New Yawk, dey make a mistake. New Yawk's jest a suburn' o' Harlem.

LISE. Ah!

TOM. And when Ah gits back there Ah's gwine walk down Fifth Avenue into de biggest stoah in town and Ah's gwine buy me a swell white hat—I mean a lily white outfit and Ah's gwine pick me out de prettiest l'il w'ite mama in town for my wife.

LUKE. And Ah'm gwine go in dat same clothin' 'stab-lishment an' buy me a nice black hat, an' a swell black suit an' a pair o' shoes Ah kin see mah face in an' be bes' man!

TOM. Bes' man at mah weddin'?

LUKE. Bes' man at yo' funeral.

LISE. My husband say your people—zey can be very rich in your country.

TOM. Sho dey can. Dey is. Yu all sure 'nough married to a black man?

LISE. Yes. My husband—he come from New Orleans.

TOM. Ah been dere.

LISE. Ah? You have been zere?

TOM. Sho, M'amzelle. New Orleans is jes another suburn' o' Harlem.

LISE. My husband ees very rich man zere. You know heem?

TOM. Sho—Ah knows dat man. What's his name?

LISE. Israel du Bois.

TOM. Sho I know dat man. He am so rich he could buy up dis little ole France o' yours an' give it back to yu fer a Christmas present.

LISE. He has one beeg house?

TOM. One? Yu ax me—one? Why say, dat man could walk from New Yawk ter San Francisco an' sleep every night in his own house.

LISE. Oh! And he has gardens?

TOM. Dey won't have to buy no flowers fo' his funeral.

LISE. And automobiles?

TOM. Just thick as fleas.

LISE [*begins to figure bills*]. You fool me!

TOM. Ah wouldn't fool no sweet l'il w'ite gal like yu! Listen heah, M'amzelle—ef yu all heah's tings diffrunt 'bout us colored people, it am jes cause us'n is de mos' impotent people—in de states—an' dem w'ite folks is jes' jealous—What Ah's tellin' yu.

LISE. Ah—oui?

TOM. Yes—we are! Ah ax yu M'amzelle, who won dis wah?

LISE. Why France—she win zee war.

TOM. France nothin'. [Picks up rifle.] Us niggers won dis wah. Why say, 'ooman, ef it hadn't been fo' us niggers dem Ge'mans ud swallow yu all up jes' lak a passel o' fish. Yes, suh, 'ooman, us niggers won dis wah.

LUKE [picks up gun and starts for door]. Time to mosey 'long, Tom.

TOM [following]. Reckon it is, Luke. Dat's all a nigger does—jes' mosey 'long.

LISE. You pay me, Messieurs.

TOM. Pay?—Pay? Did you all say—pay?

[Major Powell enters. Both negroes jerk to a salute.]

LUKE. 'Tension!

POWELL. What are you boys doing here?

TOM. We—we bofe got so'e feet, suh.

POWELL. What's that got to do with this place?

LUKE. We jes' stopped in to git some liniment, suh.

POWELL. Liniment?

LUKE. Yes, suh. Mah feet hu't so we was jus' strag-glin'—We jes' had ter stop.

POWELL. Did that liniment get down to your feet yet?

LUKE. Not yet, suh, but it's on its way.

POWELL [laughing]. Well—you better be on your way too or I'll give those feet of yours a rest cure in the hoosgow.

TOM. Mah feet's all right now, suh. Dat liniment was powerful strong.

LISE. Zey owe me five francs, Monsieur.

POWELL [to the negroes]. How about it?

TOM [turning at door]. 'Twas jes' dis way, Maja'. Us'uns figured dat jes' 'cause we won de wah, dey warn't no reason why we had to pay fo' it.

POWELL. Come on. Fork up.

TOM [*Luke shows pennies*]. Hell—Luke! Ain't
yu got no mo' money than dat?

POWELL. Shake your legs, boys—

TOM [*pays and crosses to Luke*]. Yu is de lousiest side-
kick ah ebber trabbled wid. [*Tom and Luke exit.*]

LISE [*going to bar*]. Bonjour, Monsieur.

POWELL. Bonjour, Mademoiselle. [*Takes off side arms
and trench coat.*] Une bouteille de vin blanc, s'il
vous plaît.

LISE. Bon—oui—Monsieur. This is my lucky day—
many soldiers come here.

POWELL. Well, looking at you I don't blame them.
Will you have some wine with me, Mademoiselle?

LISE [*brings two glasses and bottle of wine*]. Wiz
pleasure, Monsieur.

POWELL. Say, Mademoiselle. I haven't talked to a
woman since God knows when.

LISE. Ah, Monsieur?

POWELL [*sits left of table*]. Not since last week.

LISE [*laughing*]. Poor Monsieur—he must be starved.

POWELL. I am.

LISE [*sits on edge of table*]. Eef I no see a man for a
week, I be dead.

POWELL [*laughing*]. You know I like you French
mademoiselles.

LISE. Ah? You like zee French girls?

POWELL. A fellow can say anything he wants to with-
out getting his eyes scratched out.

LISE [*caressingly*]. Zee French girl—she like her sol-
dier Américain.

POWELL. For his money.

LISE. Oh, non-non-non-non-Monsieur. Nevair for zee money.

POWELL. Oh, yes—yes—yes—yes, Mademoiselle. Always for ze money.

LISE. Zee soldier Américain—so brave—so happy. He laughs always like one beeg boy. He even laughs when he go over zee top—

POWELL. Like hell he does. Not so you can hear him.

LISE. Always he laugh een hees heart.

POWELL. Oh—I see. Well, the next time this Major laughs in his heart, he'll be goin' over the ocean.

LISE. Over zee ocean?

POWELL. On his way home.

LISE. Oh. You go home—so soon?

POWELL. None too soon for me.

LISE. Oh. Zen you weel forget—zee French girl?

POWELL. Just as soon as I change my clothes.

LISE. But zee French girl—she weel nevair forget her soldier Américain.

POWELL. Oh, she won't, huh?

LISE. No. Nevair. You are so beautiful.

POWELL. Oh! Oh!

LISE. All you Americans are so beautiful.

POWELL. Eh! Eh! Now this stuff might have worked some time ago. But I'm on my way home now. And I'm not taking any chances of a last minute casualty. I'm a pure mother's boy from now on.

LISE. Oh, but what ees eet—one leetle kiss—one leetle love—maybe?

POWELL. Now listen, little lady. You want your big American hero to behave, don't you?

LISE. Oh, sure. Yes. I want heem to behave.

POWELL. And you wouldn't send him home without a clear conscience?

LISE. Oh, non! He must always be one good little boy. [She arises.]

POWELL. You little imp. [He catches her hand as she passes and rises.]

LISE. But sometimes eet ees very stupid to be good, n'est-ce pas?

POWELL. Now look here, little lady. I'm starved, I tell you—hungry. I'm just hungry enough to eat a little girl like you.

LISE [laughing]. Oh! [The Major embraces her. He tries to kiss her, but she draws away and places her finger upon his mouth.] Sh! Soyez sage. My husband—maybe he weel come.

POWELL. So—you're married.

LISE. Oui, Monsieur.

POWELL. Just my luck—all the good-looking girls are all taken. You've sure got your English down cold. Is he English?

LISE. No, Américain.

POWELL [sits]. Came way over here for a wife, eh?

LISE. He fight for la France.

POWELL. What part of the United States did he come from?

LISE. New Orleans.

POWELL. The hell you say. That's my home town.

LISE. My husband—he eees not like you, Monsieur. He is very dark.

POWELL. Your husband—he's not a nigger, is he?

LISE. No, Monsieur.

POWELL. I should hope not. [He laughs.]

LISE. He ees an Américain, Monsieur. What you mean when you say, "nigger"?

POWELL. Nigger? You don't know what a nigger is?

LISE. What ees eet, Monsieur?

POWELL. Why—damned if I know how to tell you!

A nigger's anything you want to make him. Some of them are mighty fine, the old ones especially. I knew one who was mighty superior. Best servant we ever had. My folks got so they most loved him—Mother especially. He was a good friend of mine, too. As much as one can be good friends with a nigger. God! I'd like to see little old New Orleans again—and drop down to the club—and get beautifully pickled—and have him come to fetch me home with his lantern. Why, when we were knee-high to grasshoppers we used to go fishing together down by the old Mississippi.

LISE [*unable to pronounce Mississippi*]. What ees eet —your Miss sipp?

POWELL. Why that's the noblest river the Lord God ever made. It could swallow all the water you've got in your ditches you call rivers and ask for more. I'd give my right eye to see that old river again. [Off-stage singing "*Pack up Your Troubles*." Major produces a picture.] What do you think of that, eh? Some place, eh?

LISE. Ah, how eet ees beautiful. Zat beeg house and zee gardens! Merveilleuse! You must be very rich, Monsieur?

POWELL. Oh, we manage to keep the wolf away.

LISE. What ees your name, Monsieur?

POWELL. Major Edward Powell.

LISE. You are what zey call "homeseek," n'est-ce pas?

POWELL. Homesick? That's not the word for it.

I'm just plain dying that's all.

LISE. My husband ees homeseek too.

POWELL. You don't blame him?

LISE. He has one fine home like zat. But when I ask heem to take me to zee United States—he only say he cannot.

POWELL. Well, he must have done something he don't want the folk back there to know. All I can say is I'm sorry for him if he can't go back. The good old U. S. A. is a place you want to be born in and you want to die in. [He drinks deeply.]

LISE. Eet ees one beautiful country?

POWELL. It's got every other country backed off the map. Well, I'm getting there as fast as my black boys can travel. There isn't a sore foot in the whole outfit. Trust a nigger to have good feet when he's going home. [He fills Lise's glass and his own. He is becoming slightly unsteady and considerably expansive. They rise and touch glasses.] To the flag—of the free—and the home—of the brave. But to hell with this man's army.

[Commandant enters.]

COMMANDANT. I beg your pardon. Are you not in command of these troops that have just arrived?

POWELL. How did you guess it?

COMMANDANT. I didn't. I asked two of your negroes where I could find their commanding officer—

POWELL. And they pointed out the nearest grop shop!

[Offers hand.] Powell's my name.

COMMANDANT. How do you do?

POWELL. I take it you're the officer in charge here.

COMMANDANT. Yes, I am—Commandant Juneste. I must have your signature to these papers.

POWELL. Sure thing. Oh—have a drink? [He signs papers.]

COMMANDANT. That, Major, seems to be your national question. In the interest of the Entente Cordiale, I accept.

POWELL. There you are. [Hands Commandant papers.] Hope my black boys won't give you any trouble while we're here.

[Singing—"Pack Up Your Troubles"—louder.]

COMMANDANT. Oh, they will be all right.

POWELL. Anyway, we're pulling out in the morning.

COMMANDANT. We have always found the black troops quiet and orderly.

POWELL. Orderly, perhaps, but not quiet. [Singing off-stage louder.] Lord—hear that? For two years my life has been one perpetual barber shop chord.

COMMANDANT. You Americans are all quite mad. Some day I shall come to your country and learn how to be as crazy as you.

POWELL. Sure, come ahead—I'll show you the ropes.

COMMANDANT. That expression—it has nothing to do with the gallows?

POWELL. No. It just means put you on the right track for a good time. Won't you sit down?

COMMANDANT. Thanks—but I must return to headquarters. You will perhaps dine with me tonight?

POWELL. That's very kind of you. Unless, of course, I find I'm needed at camp.

COMMANDANT. I'll send my orderly at six-thirty. Au revoir, Major. [They salute.]

POWELL. Good-bye, sir. [Commandant exits. Singing off-stage stops. Major and Lise go to door. Voices off right: "How's that nigger?" "Mighty fine! Sing us some more." "We're the singing fools!" Singing starts and dies away. Lise returns to table.]

LISE. Oh, that man he frightens me.

POWELL. What for?

LISE. I thought eet was my husband.

POWELL [turning from door]. No, just some of my black boys—[Then with a sudden suspicion.] Say, is your husband as dark as that?

LISE. Oui, Monsieur.

POWELL. Well I'll be damned!

LISE. For why you be damned, Monsieur?

POWELL. For God's sake! You French don't seem to give a damn about color. [He pays her. Then gets coat and puts it on.]

LISE. Color? What ees eet—what you call "color," Monsieur?

POWELL. Why—brown or yellow or black. Anything except white.

LISE [clearing table]. Zere are many French people very dark, Monsieur.

POWELL. That may be. But it isn't nigger black.

LISE. I don't know zat color.

POWELL. That's the color of the nigger you call your husband.

LISE. Ah?

POWELL. Why, damn it all. You might have a black baby on your hands.

LISE. You seenk so?

POWELL. I know so.

LISE [*smoothly*]. Monsieur, zat ees one seeng I know better zan you.

POWELL. It would be nice, wouldn't it—having a black baby on your hands?

LISE. No. Zat would not be very nice, Monsieur.

POWELL. I should say not.

LISE. Zee baby cost too much.

POWELL. For God's sake! There's no use talking to you. You'll never realize a nigger's not a man. Why he hasn't even got a soul.

LISE [*down to Major*]. Zen when he die—he cannot go to zee heaven?

POWELL. No. Not unless they've got a special place for him—

LISE. Zee nigger—he can be very rich, Monsieur?

POWELL. They say some of them are when they go north.

LISE. But een New Orleans?

POWELL. We make 'em toe the line. We'd hang that husband of yours down there. We'd shoot him so full of holes you couldn't see his shadow.

LISE [*shocked, and beginning to comprehend her situation*]. Ah?

POWELL. Yes. That's what we'd do.

LISE. Zen you Américains do not like—zee nigger?

POWELL. Oh, we like 'em all right—but in their place.

LISE. What ees zat—place, Monsieur?

POWELL. We use him for all kinds of things. We make roads with him—houses—and streets. He feeds our furnaces. He manures our fields. Sometimes he rises up like dust. He thinks he's got a soul. He'd like to be like white folks. Then he tries to ride in our street cars; go to our theatres and put his little vote in the box. Then old Jim Crow settles that dust and sweeps him into his corner. Then he gets a notion he'd like to mix with white women. [Laughs.] Then old Judge Lynch steps in—and when he gets through with that nigger—he's not even dust—he's just cinders.

LISE. What ees zat? I don't understand.

POWELL. What they did to your Joan of Arc!

LISE [*horrorified*]. You would burn my black husband in zee United States because he marry heemself to me?

POWELL. Yes. And you know what we'd do to you?

LISE [*stunned*]. No I—I do not know.

POWELL. We'd tar and feather you good. We'd make life so pleasant for you—that you'd beat it back to France if you had to swim.

LISE. Oh, Monsieur.

POWELL [*turning*]. Say. What's this nigger o' yours been telling you?

LISE. He tell me he ees one very rich man. He say he has one big beautiful house—wiz gardens—and servants—He tell me he come to France wiz some friends from America to see zee world. Zen France make war. He make heemself a French soldier.

POWELL. Then what happened?

LISE. He fight een a regiment of Senegalais from Af-

rica. He ees wounded. They give him the croix de guerre. C'est là. [She touches the coat with the croix de guerre on it and shows the Major. Then she faces him.] He come to zee hospital een zis town. When he go from zee hospital—he come here. I geeve heem what you call—a job—een my café.

POWELL [*laughing*]. Then he sprung that yarn about being rich, eh? And you married him on the strength of that?

LISE. Zen I marry myself to zat devil.

POWELL [*sitting on table*]. Pretty slick, I call it.

LISE. I want to see zat property een America. So I ask heem to take me wiz heem to zee United States.

POWELL. What did he say to that?

LISE. Always he say he cannot.

POWELL [*rises*]. Did he tell you why?

LISE. No, Monsieur—No!

POWELL. Now you know why, don't you?

LISE [*angrily*]. Ah, Monsieur, I understand. I know why he lie to me!

POWELL. Yes. And a pretty mess he got you into. I've heard nigger yarns before—but this one—Oh, Lord! [Laughs.] So—Now you know what a fine husband you've got.

LISE. Monsieur! I lie to you,—when I say—I—I—I marry myself to zat nigger! Monsieur, he ees not my husband! He ees my servant!

POWELL. I reckon you haven't much love for him.

LISE [*snapping her fingers*]. Love? Eet ees cheap. I can get zat from any French soldier I want. Love? Ah! He lie to me—zat black devil! I weel make

heem eat hees lies! [Sinks at table, head on arm. A colored Sergeant enters, salutes the Major.]

POWELL [rising]. Well—what do you want now?

SERGEANT. There's been fightin', suh, between our boys and the white of the Sixty-eighth. Been lookin' all over town for you, suh.

POWELL. The hell you have. That's a nice occupation for a horse-pistol like you. Can't I manage a few drinks—without the whole—damned army getting shell-shocked?

SERGEANT. It's gettin' serious, suh.

POWELL. Anybody—killed?

SERGEANT. Not yet, suh. Only a couple o' busted bones.

POWELL. That's nothing. If any of those babies get themselves killed and I hear about it—they'll wish to God they hadn't—Now run along. [The Sergeant salutes and turns to leave.] Wait a minute! [Sergeant turns back and salutes.] You haven't seen me—have you?

SERGEANT [smiling broadly]. No, suh. I haven't seen you, suh. [Salutes, turns and exits.]

POWELL. As if those rascals hadn't had enough fighting over here, they've got to carry the damn war all the way home.

LISE. Ah! Zat black devil! He fool me! Il se moque de moi!

POWELL [pats her]. There—there—little angel. You just leave it to me. I'll be back—soon. I'll let him know what side his bread's buttered on. [He crosses to door.] When he came over here, he just naturally forgot where his place was. But I'll show

him. It takes a—it takes a Southerner to show a nigger his place. [Exits.]

LISE. Ah canaille! Je suis ruinée! Je suis complètement ruinée—

MAJOR [off]. Où est le poste de la commande?

SAMBA. Je ne sais pas, je suis étranger ici. [Samba Sarr, the Senegalese warrior, enters. He is dressed in the French colonial costume. On his head is a red fez. His jacket is of a zouave type. His pantaloons are a brilliant red, baggy and tucked into white leggings. At his belt is the familiar and terrible "coupe-coupe," a long sabre-like knife used by his people in Africa and in the Great War. From his ears hang heavy gold rings. He stands in the doorway rigidly with immense dignity.]

LISE. Oh—that black devil!

SAMBA. Madame.

LISE. Ah?

SAMBA. Je cherche un ancien camarade, Madame. Il s'appelle Israel du Bois. Est-ce qu'il vive ici?

LISE [going upstairs]. Oui. Vous n'avez qu'à l'appeler.

SAMBA. Est-il ici?

LISE. Je ne sais pas. Appelez-le. Je ne veux pas rester. [Lise exits. Israel enters from street with a basket of laundry under his arm.]

ISRAEL [dropping basket]. Samba Sarr! [Samba raises his right arm, palm outward, towards du Bois and gives him the Senegalese ceremony of greeting.]

SAMBA. Israel du Bois—you have peace?

ISRAEL [raising hand]. Peace.

SAMBA. Your house—it has peace?

ISRAEL. Peace. Samba Sarr, you have peace?

SAMBA. Peace.

ISRAEL. Your house—it has peace?

SAMBA. Peace.

ISRAEL [*they cross, meeting at centre*]. You old black son of a Senegalese! [He embraces Samba *impetuously and kisses him on both cheeks*.] What are you doin' here, Samba?

SAMBA. Je m'en vais chez moi.

ISRAEL. Goin' home, huh? Goin' home to Africa. God! I wish I was goin' home, too, Big Boy.

SAMBA. Oui. White man—wah—fini. Samba—go —Afrique.

ISRAEL [*gets cognac for Samba*]. So you came here to see your old friend before you go?

SAMBA [*sits*]. Oui.

ISRAEL. You old black lightnin'. I sure loves yuh. And the other boys—Bakari Faye—the camel driver? And Akonan? Kouami?

SAMBA [*crosses his throat with his forefinger*]. Fini.

ISRAEL. Dead? Ahmadou Modi—the lion hunter?

SAMBA [*making the noise of a bursting shell*]. Rum-mmmmmmm!—Fini.

ISRAEL. Dead, too? Those Germans 'bout wiped out the old Senegalais battalion. All the way from Africa to get planted in the ground. But I reckon the whole German army couldn't get you, Samba. You sure could fight some—you French niggers. Bayonet an' knife work—whooie! You can't beat that jungle sort of fightin'!

SAMBA. You like um?

ISRAEL. [Looks Samba over admiringly]. Got your old coupe-coupe too, eh? Goin' to take it back to Africa—to kill those lions an' tigers with. [He fingers the long blade of the coupe-coupe.] How many men did you get with this, Samba?

SAMBA. Cinq.

ISRAEL. Five—Good they stopped that little war when they did. [Israel rises.] You was some streak o' lightnin'.

SAMBA. Black man—more strong—white man.

ISRAEL. You sure saved my life, Big Boy. Me down in the mud and that bayonet flashin' in my face. I sure thought I was goin' to say Good Mornin' to Jesus.

SAMBA. Me Senegalais—you—Senegalais.

ISRAEL. Got your little God with you, Samba?

SAMBA [smiling broadly]. Toujours. [He extracts from his breast a queer doll-like fetiche suspended by a cord about his neck.]

ISRAEL. This God make black man country?

SAMBA [shaking his head in affirmation]. Oui.

ISRAEL. But this God didn't make white man's country?

SAMBA. No.

ISRAEL. Which God more strong, Samba?

SAMBA. Samba God. [Returns the fetiche to his breast.] Samba no get bullet—no get bayonet. You get bullet—you get bayonet.

ISRAEL. I don't know, Samba—the white man he owns the world. Wherever we go—there's a white man on the water and under the water. In the air and on the land. And you can't get away from 'em.

SAMBA. You—come—Afrique? Dans un pays où il n'y a pas de blancs.

ISRAEL. A land where there's no white man! A black man ought to be happy there—When you go back, you will be a hero, Samba. The people of your village'll dance and sing:

"No one is greater than Samba Sarr!

He is greater than Bourama Seck,

For he fought in the land of the white man
And killed many enemies."

But when I go back to my country—if I ever do—there won't be no singin' over me. Some damn fool in the streets'll yell, "Hey, thar, nigger! Whar'd yu git that croix de guerre? Nursin' babies?" [Samba has fallen asleep.] "Better go back to work, nigger!" I know how you feel. Africa is your home but it ain't my home—[Looks at Samba, sees he is asleep.] Why, he's all in! Likely tramped down here! Poor old Samba! Bet he's busted. Busted. That's what he is. Five cents a day in the French army isn't a hell of a lot—for a man o' your size. [He goes behind the bar and pulls some paper coin out of the cash box and counts it.] A hundred francs. Not beaucoup much. But it'll help some. You can buy yourself a gun to shoot those lions an' tigers with. [He puts the money in Samba's pocket. Samba wakes and tips table.] You better come along before you bust any more dishes. I got a mattress in there you can sleep on, Big Boy. [He leads Samba toward the door, both laughing deeply.] Wait till I get my keys. [Samba exits. Israel is

about to follow when the Major enters. Israel starts back and recognizes the Major.] Eddie! Mister Eddie!

POWELL. Israel! Where in hell have you been! Talk about lucky meetings!

ISRAEL. Bless your heart, honey boy, where did you come from? I'm sure glad to see you!

POWELL. Old coal dust—black as ever!

ISRAEL. French climate can't hurt my complexion. You haven't changed either. Let me feast my eyes on you. All dressed up for the war.

POWELL [sits]. By God, yes. Seein' you again sure puts sugar in life.

ISRAEL. Wait a minute an' I'll put some sugar in something you'll like better'n your sweet life! What say? [He goes to the bar and begins mixing drinks.] I've learned a lot o' things since I saw you—an' one of them's mixin' French drinks. I can mix a drink that'll take you right across the ocean an' put you to bed. Oh, Boy, yes, suh. My God—I'm glad to see you.

POWELL [sitting]. Why, just a moment ago, I was talking about the old Mississippi—and you and I fishing—and up you pop like a jack-in-the-box.

ISRAEL. Yes, suh, an' I'm still a poppin'. [Serves Powell with drink.]

POWELL. Why—it's four years now since the damn fracas started—four years.

ISRAEL. Yes, suh. But they're all gone now.

POWELL. Four years since we had to leave you on the docks at Marseilles.

ISRAEL. With all the baggage. Oh, I—I understand.

Yes sir. And I didn't know enough French to get in out of the rain.

POWELL. I didn't want to go. But you know how my mammy felt—with that war right on top of her—she was so afraid of submarines. I couldn't leave her.

ISRAEL. Bless her little heart. How is she?

POWELL. Not very strong, Israel. Getting older.

ISRAEL. Lord, how I miss Miss Sally!

POWELL. She wrote several letters to you after the first you sent—Did you get them?

ISRAEL. No, I didn't. I wish I had! When I didn't hear I had hard feelin's toward you all—I hated all white people. I hated 'em for making me join the war—

POWELL. So they shanghaied you?

ISRAEL. Yes, sir—forced me to join the Foreign Legion. Mr. Eddie, you should have seen me in that recruiting office—with fifty of them Frenchmen all talkin' at once—winking their eyebrows—and tryin' to make me sign somethin'. I didn't know what it was all about. But I just kept waving my arms about—Then one of them tickled my legs with a bayonet—and I signed.

POWELL. I reckon you've seen some life over here, eh, Boy?

ISRAEL. I've seen hot times, that would make ole New Orleans feel like the North Pole. Yes, suh, five battles that would make hell ashamed of itself.

POWELL. Wounded?

ISRAEL. Four times.

POWELL. Proud of you, Boy.

ISRAEL. I was a sergeant with the Senegalese troops.

The Germans blanged away on three sides. When those black boys knew it was all up they didn't run —they just sang the Senegalese song of death. [He sings a brief weird chant for a moment.] The last I saw of them they was throwin' their guns high in the air and catching 'em like drum-majors and bein' shot down like clay pigeons. Then—then somethin' hit me and I couldn't see no more.

POWELL. We'll never see another big show like it.

ISRAEL. It's like a dream. Life don't seem real over here nohow.

POWELL. Let's make it real, Boy. Come back with me.

ISRAEL. I'd like to, honey boy, but I can't.

POWELL. What are you doing here?

ISRAEL [turns to Powell]. Workin' an—[Samba's voice breaks in from off-stage.]

SAMBA. Israel du Bois!

ISRAEL. Un moment, Samba.

POWELL. Who is that?

ISRAEL. It's Samba Sarr, my Senegalese friend. He's on his way to Africa.

SAMBA. Israel! [Israel takes key from coat on post at top bar. Lise starts singing in bedroom.]

ISRAEL. Un moment, Samba! I'll be back soon, honey boy. God, I'm sure glad to see you. [He exits.]

POWELL [realizing Israel is her husband]. So—that's it. [He goes up to balcony and raps on bedroom door.] Mademoiselle, will you come down here a

minute, please? [He comes down to foot of stairs as Lise enters from bedroom.]

LISE. Ah, Monsieur, you have come back! [She comes down stairs. Powell points to Israel's coat.]

POWELL. Is that your husband's coat?

LISE. Yes.

POWELL. That's all I want to know. I'm waiting for him.

LISE [eagerly]. What weel you tell zat nigger?

POWELL. Tell him? Why—to get out.

LISE. He weel go?

POWELL. He'll go so fast he'll be in Paris before I'm through.

LISE. Oh.

LISE. Oh, Dieu merci! Monsieur—some cognac? [Goes to bar.]

POWELL [sitting on table]. No, thanks. I—I need a clear head—And it isn't too damn clear now.

LISE [coming back with cognac]. But this will help.

POWELL. You French spoil niggers. You treat 'em as if they were somebody. You wind up by taking orders from 'em. He'll take his orders from me now. He'll know who's his master. I'll make that nigger sweat blood before he gets out o' here.

LISE. But he weel not hurt you?

POWELL. Hurt me?

LISE. Oh, I am afraid he weel hurt Monsieur.

POWELL [laughs]. I know how to handle that animal.

LISE. He ees very strong, Monsieur.

POWELL. You don't think I'm going to soil my hands on him, do you? We've got other ways o' doing that trick down South.

LISE. He has a revolver behind the bar.

POWELL. Let it alone. You don't think I'm going to let him shoot it, do you?

LISE [*she sits*]. Oh, I—I would not have you hurt—dear Monsieur. [*She caresses the hands of the Major.*]

POWELL. There—there.

LISE. Monsieur ees so good to Lise. Lise ees afraid. [*She leans her head very close to his.*]

POWELL. There, I'll get rid of him for you.

LISE. I like Monsieur. [*Tries to put her arms about him.*]

POWELL. No, none of that. I'm just sorry for you.

LISE. And will you not give Lise one so leetle kiss?

POWELL [*pushing her away*]. Sorry for the whole damn mess!

ISRAEL [*enters*]. Yes, suh. I got old Samba tucked away like a baby and snorin' like a—

POWELL [*sternly*]. Get me a bottle of cognac, nigger!

ISRAEL. What's the matter? I—don't understand.

POWELL. You'll understand soon enough.

ISRAEL. For God's sake!

POWELL. Get me a bottle of cognac.

ISRAEL. Be—careful what you say.

POWELL [*rises—steps toward Israel*]. Do you hear me? Get me that cognac!

ISRAEL. You're not commandin' me—even if you are an American officer!

POWELL. Do as I tell you—you black devil!

ISRAEL. Eddie Powell—I'm not your servant any longer!

POWELL [*laughing disdainfully*]. So—you're getting

mighty stuck-up and independent since you've been in France.

ISRAEL. That's just where I am—in France!

POWELL. Having a nice time—strutting around with the ladies, eh?

ISRAEL. What were you all doing with that woman?

POWELL. What's she to you?

ISRAEL. That's my business!

POWELL [*to Israel*]. Well, by God, I'll make it mine!

ISRAEL. Keep away, Major. I've got a gun. And your war taught me how to use it.

POWELL. You go to hell.

ISRAEL. I've been there and back again. And I've got a bullet in my insides to prove it. You're not talkin' to a poor nigger down New Orleans way that couldn't tell his own soul from a skunk. You're talkin' to a man that's been a sergeant in the French army!

POWELL. Anything else—you've done?

ISRAEL. I've killed white men.

POWELL. So—that's what they gave you that little croix de guerre for?—Eh?

ISRAEL. Yes, suh—And I'm entitled to some respect for it.

POWELL. By God,—you won't get any from me. [*He turns away.*]

ISRAEL. I'm not askin' you for any, Eddie Powell.

POWELL. So—I—I suppose that little piece o' tin gives you the right over here to fool with white women. [*Turns and points to Lise.*] This woman you're keeping—

ISRAEL. You leave her out of it! You can call me what

you damn please but don't you dare open your mouth about her! If you do—you won't get out o' here alive!

POWELL. By God, I'll break every bone in your body!

[*He seizes bottle from table and advances toward Israel, who recedes.*]

ISRAEL. Stand back, Major! For God's sake stand back.

LISE. Ah! He weel shoot! Be careful, Monsieur!

POWELL. We thought we had raised you to be a decent negro. We trusted you. But now—[*Lise comes between them.*]

ISRAEL. Stand back, Major! I don't want to quarrel with nobody. All I want is peace—and her!

LISE. You tell me you are a rich man. I beleeve you. Like a fool I beleeve you. Go away! Get out! Make heem go away.

ISRAEL. I didn't mean to lie to you. I was just dreaming—then when you believed it and we were happy! I couldn't tell you no different.

LISE. You are poor—like dirt!

ISRAEL. Lise—Lise!

LISE. I hate you! I never loved you—But I was tired of being poor.

POWELL [*angrily to Lise.*]. So that's it! You got him to marry you because you thought he had money! Well, you got what you deserve. Go back to your quarters.

[*Lise goes upstairs, turns at door of room.*]

LISE. Make heem go away tonight!

POWELL. Go in there!

LISE [*to Israel.*]. Canaille! [She exits.]

ISRAEL. I don't want to quarrel with you, Major.
POWELL [*takes bottle to table*]. Damned if I'll fight
with a nigger. Yes, I'll be damned if I will.
[*Powell goes to street door. Israel follows.*]

ISRAEL. Mister Eddie! Mister Eddie! I don't want
you to go, feelin' like this. I don't want you to go
back to the home folks sayin' as how Israel's changed
and forgot you. I haven't changed. I've just been
here where they don't mind my color. I'm all
tangled up. But I haven't forgot you. I love you
all, Mister Eddie. I'm eatin' my heart out here.

POWELL [*Softly. Coming back to Israel*]. Why
don't you come home—where you belong?

ISRAEL. I don't know where I belong. It's a white
man's world, Mr. Eddie. There don't seem to be no
place where a black man can find peace and be happy.

POWELL. There's only one place in the world where a
man can be really happy and that's the country where
he was born. My outfit leaves at four to-morrow
morning. It's your one chance to come back.

ISRAEL. I can't go. I love her no matter how she
treats me.

POWELL. She's ruining you. She's ruining a decent
southern nigger, that knew his place. You're coming
back with me to the States if I have to get my whole
battalion to drag you there. [Major walks to the
street door and opens it.] I'm coming back tonight
to take you with me. And I'm going to tell that
woman of yours—just—what—I think of her! I'm
going to put her—right—in—her place! [Powell
exits.]

CURTAIN

ACT II

It is 2 A.M.—that night. One table is pushed up-stage. A bucket of water and rag under it. Stools on top of it. As the curtain rises, Lise is sitting by the table apparently asleep.

POWELL [offstage, knocks on door]. Come on, open this door, you black rascal. [Pounds on door.] I told you I was coming back. Let me in. [Lise unlocks door and sneaks up steps, hides behind post. Major Powell enters and crosses to centre of stage.] Where the hell are you, you black devil? [He crosses to bar and pounds on it with fist—pulls on light over bar; then sits on table. Lise laughs.]

LISE. Ah, Monsieur. It is so late, I thought you forgot! [Coming down stairs.] Bonsoir Monsieur. Good evening, Monsieur. Monsieur is angry wiz—Lise?

POWELL. Oh, go to the devil.

LISE. Ah—Monsieur ees not—kind.

POWELL. Where's that nigger of yours?

LISE. I do not know. He left zee café.

POWELL. He'll be back soon?

LISE. He left zee café right after you. I have not seen heem. I don't know where he ees.

POWELL. Well, what *do* you know?

LISE [crosses to behind bar]. I only know—eet ees not like Monsieur—to be—what you call—so rude. He ees just like one naughty boy. Maybe—a leetle wine?

POWELL. No—I'm drunk enough—now.

LISE. Some fine champagne? I have some very good fine champagne!

POWELL. Oh, have it your own way.

LISE. Have eet my own way? Bon! [Brings bottle and glass, pours wine and puts arm about Powell's neck. He pushes arm away.] Monsieur came to see —Lise?

POWELL. Yes, I came to see you. I've something to say to you.

LISE. Ah? How nice—Monsieur.

POWELL. You won't think it's so nice after I get through saying it. But I'm reserving—my remarks —till later.

LISE. When will Monsieur tell me all zee nice stories?

POWELL. When I get through—with that nigger of yours.

LISE. Zen you did not come to see Lise?

POWELL. I know what you're driving at. I've got your number. I'm here to take that—nigger away from you.

LISE. Ah? Suppose I weesh to keep my husband, Monsieur? A woman has a right to keep—her husband?

POWELL. Don't you meddle in this. He's not your husband. You told me so—youself.

LISE. Suppose I change my mind, Monsieur? A woman can change her mind.

POWELL. Your mind's so damned small—it wouldn't make any—difference—if you did—change it.

LISE. Ah. How angry ees Monsieur. I like Monsieur —when he ees angry. [Her hand is on his shoulder; he pushes it off.]

POWELL. Don't you try any—vamp stuff—on me. When they blow—taps over me—they ain't going to say I went back on a friend—even if he was a nigger. Put that—in your pipe—and smoke it.

LISE. Monsieur ees one very funny man.

POWELL. Maybe you won't think I'm so damn—funny —when I get through with you. I'm going to take that nigger back to the States with me.

LISE. Oh! Suppose I tell heem I love heem. You seenks he weel go back wiz you?

POWELL. Love? You? You've got about as much love as a cat. When God made you he forgot to give you a heart. [Singing in distance "Smiles."]

LISE [leaning across table]. Monsieur know zee heart of zee woman? You have—what you call—experience?

POWELL. I didn't come here to boast. But I've had just enough—to know—what you are. And I came here—to tell you. But I'm too—too damn much of a gentleman. [He drinks.]

LISE [behind table, caressing him]. I—I like you—Monsieur. [Powell takes cigarette case from pocket.]

POWELL. It's more'n—I can say—about you.

LISE [her arms around his neck]. Lise—likes her soldier Américain.

POWELL. Well—I'm not especially complimented. [Powell tries to take cigarette out of case.]

LISE. Poor Monsieur. Let me help you. [She lights match for cigarette, placing arm around Powell's

neck. He blows it out—lights another himself. He tries to disengage himself. Lise turns to cigarette case she still holds and sits.] Zat ees one very pretty box—Monsieur. Silver?

POWELL. Naw! It's—brass. [Chuckles.]

LISE. All zee Américains are so rich, Monsieur. You buy eet?

POWELL. No.

LISE. Somebody geeve you zee box for a present?

POWELL. My mother. Best damn woman ever lived.

LISE. Poor Lise—she have no—muzzer.

POWELL. Anybody—could tell that—without—looking. [Reaches for case; she withholds it. The singing dies away.]

LISE. Ah, comme c'est jolie! Lise like you—Monsieur. [She caresses him. He reaches for case.] Lise like to remember her Américain soldier. He weel be very—kind. N'est-ce pas? He weel geeve zee box—to Lise?

POWELL. No—damn you. Give me that! [He reaches for cigarette case again; she withholds it. A struggle ensues.] Give it—to me! [She eludes him and runs across stage. She faces Powell, holding case in air. Powell tries to reach case which she holds. She runs to platform at foot of stairs. He reaches her. When she is in his arms, he kisses her. She frees herself and goes upstairs, Powell following. She slams the door of her room in his face.] Open that door! Do you hear me? [He tries to open door. She opens it from inside and Powell enters, closing door.]

[Way off in distance voices singing "Tipperary."]

Then clock strikes twice. Street door is opened and Tom enters. He crosses, speaking and shaking dice as he goes.]

TOM. Come on, bones—tell me I oughter be heah in dis café. Dat's de ticket. Read 'em and aggravate yourself. Now little shakin' dice—treat yo' pappy right. Tell me sebben come eleben. [Picks up bottle of cognac and blows into it.] Limited! [Drinks, coughs violently, continues playing.] Ah's gwine git home safe and sound fo' muh Lulu's kisses. Ah, mama, yo sho is 'bedient chillun. Don' lie now, snake's eyes. Tell me once again. Ah'm gwine home. [Israel enters street door. At first click of latch, Tom retreats.]

ISRAEL. How'd you get in here?

TOM. I seen a light and I just walked in.

ISRAEL. The door wasn't locked?

TOM. No—

ISRAEL. Was anybody here when you came?

TOM. If there had a been I'd a had me a drink by now.

ISRAEL. Well, que voulez-vous, Monsieur? [Pulls on light.]

TOM. Don't you try to high-tone me. Talk United States.

ISRAEL. What's your hurry, Big Boy?

TOM. I wuz in a hurry fo' ter get in heah. But I ain' gwine to bu'n de hide off ma feet gettin' out. Kase dere's a M.P. cop lookin' fo' me. [He crosses to bar. Israel gives him drink.]

ISRAEL. What's he after you for?

TOM. Kase dey know us niggers gwine hab a swell time

ternight. An' dem white officers don' wanter let us hab it.

ISRAEL [*in front of table cleaning up*]. So they put a guard around the camp.

TOM. Ah'll say so. Doubled de guard. Ole Major Powell he don' know de wah's over, yet. He come back ter camp ternight fighting mad wid sumpin' on his mind beside booze.

ISRAEL. Does Major Powell treat you right?

TOM. W'en he ain' soused. But jes' yu let him get tanked up—dere ain' no nigger better step in his road. But us niggers is gittin' fed up on dis man's ahmy. We's gwine home. An' we's gwine hab a swell time gittin' dere—Maja or no Maja. Dere's sebben niggers comin' here ternight, dat Ah knows. I'se de fust.

ISRAEL. Was Major Powell drunk when you saw him last?

TOM. Jes' 'nuff ter put de red in his eye. But gettin' wus all de time. Seems like he got sumpin' more'n drinks in his haid.

ISRAEL. Big Boy, the Major's comin' here tonight.

TOM. Maja Powell—comin' heah—ternight?

ISRAEL. Yes, suh.

TOM. Lawdy! Comin' heah?

ISRAEL. Yes, suh.

TOM. Tell it to me in French so Ah don' know it.

ISRAEL. Le Major va venir ici ce soir.

TOM. Huh? Dat's bettah. [*Luke enters.*]

LUKE. Hello, Tom.

TOM. Yu better say good-bye.

LUKE. W'ut fo'? Ain' Ah jes come?

TOM. Yu bettah jes go.

LUKE. Huccome?

TOM. Kase ole Maja Powell's comin' heah ternight his-self.

LUKE. You talkin' sense, nigger? Yu ain' kiddin' me?

TOM. Ax him.

ISRAEL. Tom's right.

LUKE [starting for street]. Dat lets me out. [Singing loud—dogs bark. Jake, Bill and Spuds enter, greeting Tom and Luke.]

TOM [below bar]. Oh, Lawd! Heah's de 'hole black regimen. [Slick, Walt and Mose enter. Chorus, Howdy, sojers. Chuck enters, dancing. Then Chip, Banjo Eph and Buck. Mose and Walt shoot dice. General chatter while Israel gets acquainted with boys.]

JAKE. Say—[Everybody quiet.] Whar's Jim?

LUKE. Mus' ter got hisself caught in de hoosgow. He's got jes' 'nuff ejjicashun ter go ter jail. Allus shootin' off his face 'bout sumpin' er other. [Jim enters street door, closing door quickly. Everybody starts, then recognizes Jim. Greeting.] Hello, Mr. Ejjicashun. Ain' yu 'fraid o' losin' yo' prestige nib-nobbin' with all dese ignorant niggers?

TOM. Hello, Jim. Does yo' mammy know yu's out? Ain' yu 'fraid she's gwine spank yo' bottom?

BILL. Oh! Oh! [General laugh.]

JIM. Hello, you god damned niggers.

WALT. Hot Dog!

SLICK. Who's gwine ter gib us a drink?

TOM. 'Tenshun, company—fall in fo' likker! [They all line up at bar. Chatter as Jim sits at table.]

JAKE. So this is France!

TOM [*before they drink*]. Right face! [They turn down-stage.] Fo'wa'd ma'ch—column right. [Men turn and march about four steps and then mark time.]

ALL BOYS. We ain't on parade!

We can't drink marching.

Say—this is a crying shame!

JAKE. Hey, Gen'al! Whar yu all ca'culatin' to march us?

TOM. Right back ter camp.

JAKE. W'at's de big idea?

BILL. Ain' we gwine ter hab no swell time ternight?

TOM. Yu sho is. Yu'se gwine ter hab de biggest time o' yo sweet life, nigger. Ef yu wants ter meet up wid Maja Powell—[They break ranks, crowding about Tom.] you stay right whar yu is.

JAKE. Maja Powell—comin' heah?

MOSE. What?

TOM. I don' speak twict.

VOICES. Why he's gwine on de boat.

Shuah he is.

He's got ter go there.

He ain't comin' back.

BILL. Look heah, Tom. Yu ain' slippin' dat ovah on us niggers. Us'uns all got a pow'ful likin' fer likker ternight.

TOM. Well, ef yu tink Maja Powell will set hisself down ter drink wid yu—yu stay—but I gits! [Starts to door. A few of the Boys start to door.]

LUKE. Us pore niggers ud lak ter know w'ut Mister Ejjicashun's gwine ter do. [Murmurs: "Yes"—

"Shuah"—"Yeah"—"W'at gwine ter do."] Maybe he's gwine ter stay.—Huh?

JIM. Yes, you ornery niggers. I'm going to stay. If all you black sheep want to go blaa-blaaing back to camp—put your tails between your legs and go, see? I stay!

BILL. Dat nigger's got nerve. I be boun'.

LUKE. All de same, de jail ain' no place fer a nigger w'en he's gwine home.

ISRAEL. Listen here, Big Boys—I don't want you getting into trouble for a little jubilee tonight. But I'm mighty glad to see United States niggers again. It does me a heap of good to set eyes on you again. [He takes a franc from cash box.] I'll throw this franc. Heads you stay. Tails you sneak back to camp. [General chorus of assent.]

WALT. That's O.K.!

LUKE. No! French money ain' no damn good. It don' bring no luck. Tom's got a good ole United States dollah. Wears it right on his heaht for lady-luck. T'row it, Tom. [All move around Tom. He flips dollar in air, then picks it up.]

TOM. Tails. [Groans from crowd.]

SPUDS. Back to camp!

JIM. Never no luck for a nigger.

LUKE. Dat dollah talks. [Israel fills a number of glasses with cognac.]

TOM. Tell me whar to go. Dat dollah's mah lady-luck—Comin'? [Crosses to door.] Ssh! Ssh! Ah sees sumpin' movin' out here. Maybe it's de M.P. cop. We cain't all leave heah t'once—just one at a time—Ah'll go first! [Dashes to door.]

ISRAEL. Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You'll get caught anyway. And you'd feel better in that hoosgow with a few drinks under your belts. What say, Big Boys? My treat.

TOM. Dat's w'at Ah come foh.

ISRAEL. Here you are, Tom.

TOM. That drink talks better than my dollar.

[General murmur of approval. They all cross to bar, breaking into "How Dry I am."]

ISRAEL. Wet your whistle. [Boys sing: "Oh How I Hate to Get up in the Morning."] How goes it, niggers?

TOM [drinking from bottle]. It jest sort of slips along home.

LUKE [grabbing Tom's bottle]. Here, nigger, don't go to Georgia with that bottle.

TOM. Jumpin' Jesus—don' joggle ma ahm. Ah'll get th'ough when Ah gits th'ough and not befo'. Dere. [He passes bottle to Luke. Luke drinks and hands it to Jake.]

ISRAEL. Lock that door, Jim. [Jim crosses to door and locks it.]

LUKE. Hot damn. Dat's de stuff.

JAKE. It's de only thing Ah'll miss w'en Ah gits back to Bummingham.

LUKE. It's so smooth it feels just like swallering de Lord in velvet britches.

TOM. Ef Ah meets de Maja now, Ah'll bite off bofe his ears and fry 'em fo dinner.

ISRAEL. Go on, Boys—enjoy yourselves! [Banjo breaks into "Darktown Strutter's Ball." All sing.]

So all you boys is goin' home! [Banjo plays "Take Me Back to Ole Virginie."]

CHIP [at end of "Virginie"]. Give us some hell-raisin' music, Doc. [Banjo breaks into "Over There." Then into "Turkey in Straw." Tom dances.]

ISRAEL [at end of "Turkey in Straw"]. Sing me some-
thin' more. [Quintette sings "The Wheel." Then
banjo plays "Old Black Joe." Chuck, Tom and Luke
dance together.]

WALT. Have you all got some poker chips 'round here?

ISRAEL. Sure I have. Right in there on the table.

SLICK. Deal me a hand. [Walt and Slick exit into room.]

MOSE. Lead me to 'em. [Mose and Chuck exit.]

CHIP. Dat's where Ah shine! [Chip exits room singing "Mammy." The others take it up as soon as he exits.]

TOM. Dat's where yu shine, eh? Well here's where I
shine so long I got dis good right ahm. [Tom shakes
dice.]

LUKE. Don' you get itchy feet for the ole stompin'
groun'?

ISRAEL. Itchy foot? Why, sometimes I get that itchy
foot so bad I could cross the ocean on roller skates.

TOM. Boy, when Ah gits back to Harlem, the Statue
of Liberty will have to come ashore if she wants to
see me again. [Knock on door.]

ISRAEL. Boys, you can get up in that room if it's the
M.P.'s, so don't worry. Leave it to me. [Jim tries
door on balcony.] Not that door. That's my wife's
bedroom.

JIM. It's locked anyhow.

ISRAEL. Locked?

VOICE. Israel! C'est Sabbatini. [General relief.]

ISRAEL. Pas moyen d'entrer ce soir, Sabbatini.

LUKE. Dat ain't de Maja's password.

ISRAEL [to Jim]. You say the door's locked?

JIM. It sure is.

ISRAEL. Guess my wife must have locked it.

WALT. Hey—bring us some likker.

BILL. Sure—take 'em that. I'll take 'em this. [Takes bottle and glasses from bar.]

SLICK. Bring us some hot stuff.

MOSE. Some old home gin. [Bill exits into room.]

CHORUS OF VOICES [in room off]. Give me some of dat red ink.

Pass dat grape juice.

Attaboy.

Saved my life.

JAKE. I didn't know you all was married. [Singing of "Mammy" off.]

ISRAEL. Yes, I'm married.

JAKE. Ah didn't know there was any black ladies over here in France.

ISRAEL. There aren't any.

SPUDS. Golly, yu must be libben in hebbien, nigger.

JIM. There ain't no heaven for a nigger when he tangles up with white angels.

TOM. Shet up, Jim. Yu all'd make a hell uv a black angel, yu would.

ISRAEL. No. Jim's right.

LUKE. How'd you get in dat frog uniform?

ISRAEL [sitting on table]. I enlisted.

JIM. Hell you enlisted. No nigger'd enlist in a white army if he didn't have to.

ISRAEL. Jim's right again. I was shanghaied.

JIM. Ain't we all shanghaied?

LUKE. Shanghaied? What's dat?

TOM. Luke, don' parade yo ignorance. Yu is nuffin' but a dumb cootie!

LUKE. Cootie, is I! Dat's some compliment from de mos' deloused man in de army!

TOM. Shanghaied? I reckon yu wuz some scaired nigger.

ISRAEL. I sure was. It seemed like the war was right next door. But when they began to drill us—marchin' us up and down—jumpin' into fake trenches an' stabbin' fake men with bayonets, I got to kind o' like it. I felt like somebody. I felt like a free man!

[*Laugh off, singing continues.*]

JIM. That's the way white men fool us niggers. When they got a dirty job for us to do, they make us think we're somebody. But they're only laughin' at us all the time. They're only laughin' at us! God damn 'em!

LUKE. Dere's old Mister Ejjicashun again.

JIM. It's niggers like you . . .

TOM. Aw, fergit it, Jim! [To Israel.] Dat's all Jim talks 'bout sence he's been in de ahmy. Shootin' off his face 'gainst de States!

LUKE. Anybody'd tink you didn't have no three squares a day.

JIM. God damn the States!

TOM. Look heah, nigger. Don' you talk lak dat in dat uniform. Dere's been too many niggers daid in

dat unif'm. Ef you wanter talk like dat, yu jes' change yo close.

LUKE. Nigger, when you gets back to the States, dey'll string yu up.

JIM. They won't have no chance to string me up. My neck's long enough to reach ground anywherees. I ain't going back to the God-damned States.

WALT. My Lawd!

TOM. You ain't gwine—home?

JIM. I ain't got no home. I leave you boys—tonight.

TOM. Yu all gwine to quit der outfit—tonight?

JIM. You heard me, Tom. Go back home to your Jim Crows an' your lynchin's. I'm through, see! I'm going to stay right here in France where a man's a man!

TOM. Yu gwine ter desert de ahmy?

[Song "Rose of Picardy" starts off.]

JIM. You bet I am.

TOM. What'll de Maja say 'bout dat, nigger?

JIM. You tell the Major he can kiss my foot.

LUKE. Ole Mister Ejjicashun's gettin' mighty inde-God-damn-pendent. He won't feel lak dat when he gets dat rope 'round his neck.

JIM. I ain't afraid of no rope like you. And Joe—he wasn't afraid of no rope either when they lynched him from that lamp post. He laughed at 'em—just like they was laughin' at him. [Short pause.]

TOM. W'at Joe was dat?

JIM. My brother.

TOM. Yo brudder—dey lynched him?

JIM. He didn't have no chance.

TOM. W'ut fo dey lynched him?

JIM. 'Cause they couldn't find the white man that did it.

[*Pause as Jim goes up-stage.*]

ISRAEL. Have another little drink, Big Boys.

[*Murmurs of approval. Banjo breaks into "Liza Jane."*]

LUKE. Ef dem white folks don' watch out—dey'll send too many niggers to heaven. Den ole Mister Saint Peter'll have to move out.

TOM. Shet up, Luke. Yu's a damn fool.

[*Song off left stops. Hearty laugh. Banjo increases volume on "Liza Jane." Luke dances. Near end of dance a knock on street door. Everybody tense and quiet.*]

ISRAEL. Ssh. [Crossing to door.] Stay right where you are. [Calling off.] Qui est là?

SAMBA [off]. Samba Sarr.

ISRAEL. Open the door, Spuds. Go on—open it. [Spuds opens door. Samba enters. Israel meets him, putting hand on shoulder. Bill enters from room and Mose and Chip appear in door.]

LUKE. Oh, boy—look w'at's here.

TOM. Who is dat man?

ISRAEL. That's Africa.

TOM. So dat's Africa—my Gawd!

[*Israel indicates everything is all right to Samba.*]

LUKE. Ef dat's Africa, Geo'gia's a good 'nuff place fo me.

TOM. Hello, Africa.

ISRAEL. His right name's Samba Sarr.

TOM. Hello, Samba Sarr.

SAMBA. Qui est ce fou-là?

ISRAEL. C'est un de mes amis, Samba.

TOM. Ah didn't know dey talked French down in Africa, Samba.

LUKE. Sho yu big sap. Ain' a nigger got a right ter talk French anywhere he wanster?

TOM. Listen, nigger, close yo' mouf or you'll catch yo' death o' cold. [Examining Samba.] Oh boy—dat's de elephant's lavaliere! Dat's de fust time Ah knowed alligators had earrings.

ISRAEL. Go easy, Tom. He don't think much of United States niggers. And he's quick with that knife. Say to him now—Samba Sarr—you have peace—and he'll say—peace. Then you say—Your house—it has peace—and he'll say—peace. That's the way they shake hands down in Africa.

TOM. Yeah? Samba Sarr—you have peace?

SAMBA. Peace.

TOM. Your house—it has peace?

SAMBA. Peace. You—have peace?

TOM. Peace.

SAMBA. Your house—it has peace?

TOM. Peace.

LUKE [*left centre.*] Hell it has. Yu ain't got no house.

TOM [*to Luke*]. Listen heah, Luke. W'ut Ah ain't got's de mos' important thing about me, ain't it? Can't a man talk about w'at he ain't got?

LUKE. No man can't talk about what ain't. What ain't—ain't—and all de talkin' in de worl' don' make it is.

TOM. Is yu or is yu ain'? Kase ef yu is—I'se gwine bash you in yo' mouf.

LUKE. I ain't!

[All laugh.]

ISRAEL. Now boys, you're introduced to Africa. Tom get him a drink. [Tom goes for drink.] And for the Lord's sake, remember about treating him easy. He talks just enough United States to make him touchy. And he's a fighting lion of Judah when he's mad. He's got an idea we're sons of slaves.

[Banjo plays "Rings on My Fingers."]

JIM. Well, we are, aren't we?

JAKE. Aw, shet up, Jim!

[Tom hands Samba a drink, then turns to Banjo Eph.]

TOM. Hey, can dat stuff—[Banjo stops.] Yu all want dat big knife in yo' guts?

ISRAEL. He's on his way to Africa, boys. We were pals at the front, him and me.

TOM. Got any pretty li'l girls down in Africa, Samba?

SAMBA. Much jolie fatma.

TOM. Much jolly fat-ma. Oh, boy—much jolly fat-ma. When Ah gits home Ah'm going to call my Lindy Lou much jolly fat-ma. Oh, boy!

[They laugh.]

SAMBA [To Luke]. Yu come Afrique?

ISRAEL. He'll take you on one of his lion hunts.

TOM. Not dis baby. You mean Luke!

LUKE. Me? Hunt dem circus lions? Say, nigger—he ain't talkin' ter me. Mister Ejjicashun—he'd lak ter go ter Africa—de States is too tame fer him.

JIM. I'll go with you, Samba.

LUKE. He's talkin' about jungle lions, not dandelions!

TOM. What else yu got down dere, Samba?

LUKE. Any theatres?

TOM. He don' need no theatres. He gets all de leg shows he wants fo nothin'.

[*Chorus of: "Hot Dog"—"Wow"—"Yeh" Bo."*]

BILL. Any policy?

WALT. Yu shoot craps?

TOM. Come on, let's teach him African golf. [They start to teach Samba dice when French voices are heard off.]

JIM. Ssh! [Looks off.] It's all right. Just a bunch of Frogs.

CHUCK. If I hears any more shushing, I'll be a shell-shocked baby.

ISRAEL. You better stay then. The M.P.'s won't hear you. What you say? I'll bring you some drinks. [They all go off singing "Katy."]

TOM. Come on, Luke. Ah wants to win yo whole month's wages.

LUKE. W'en Ah gets through wid yo purse, it'll look like a sick possum.

TOM. Come on, Africa. [Samba shakes his head.] That baby ain't got no sense. [Pantomime. Tom shakes dice in his hand. Samba still refuses. Then Tom pulls money out of pocket and clinks it. Samba then understands and both leave stage laughing. They exit and close door. Singing low. Jim follows to door, then goes behind bar.]

JIM. Hell with 'em.

ISRAEL. Better have a little game, Jim. You'll feel better.

JIM. I'm through with that gang.

ISRAEL. Do you mean that?

JIM. Every damn word of it.

ISRAEL. Seems like a good bunch of boys to me.

JIM. That's just it. They're only boys. They'll never grow up nohow. Fill 'em up with a few drinks an' the whole damn world can go to hell.

ISRAEL. Well, it wouldn't make no difference if the old world did go to hell, would it?

JIM. No, I reckon you're right. I wish it would. Then I wouldn't have to think no more. [Song off left, "*Deep River.*"] I wouldn't have to think of being a nigger in a white man's world. I wouldn't have to think no more about the rotten deal He gave us.

ISRAEL. Look here, Jim. You know we get mad just because we don't know where He's leading us. We're just ignorant niggers, and the white man, he don't know no better'n us about the ways of the Lord. [*Israel stops and listens as the song swells in volume.*] That's it—the way of the Lord is just like that old deep river. It don't come nowhere—it don't go nowhere. It just carries us along—like rats on a shingle.

JIM. Is it true—about these white folks treatin' you on the square over here, treating you just like you was one of them?

ISRAEL. Well, here I am and here's my little café. [Song off "*God's Heaven*" starts.]

JIM. And they don't kick you off the cars?

ISRAEL. Not if you got a ticket.

JIM. And you can vote if you want to?

ISRAEL. Yes. If it makes you feel any better.

JIM. Say, will you help me out?

ISRAEL. Out of what?

JIM. Out of the God-damned army.

ISRAEL. Better watch your step, Jim. Your Uncle Sam's got a thousand—[*Laugh off during song*] eyes and his hands reach clear round the world.

JIM. I don't care. I'm through, I tell you! They'll have to drag me aboard that ship. I'm gonna stay right here in France. Will you help me out?

ISRAEL. How can I help you?

JIM. Hide me somewhere—until the outfit goes away.

ISRAEL. But after all our boys are gone—what can you do?

JIM. Oh, I—I could find a job or somethin'.

ISRAEL. Jobs? Why them French soldiers are coming home. And they wouldn't stand it—having a foreigner takin' their jobs from them—and a black one at that. [*Laugh off.*]

JIM. They—they'd get used to it.

ISRAEL. But the army'd always be lookin' for you.

JIM. I'll take a chance.

LUKE [*entering*]. Help! Help! Samba Sarr says he's got ten wives down in Africa and me and Tom can have 'em all. Hot damn!

[*Loud laugh as Luke exits.*]

ISRAEL. You hear them boys laughing, Jim.

JIM [*sitting on table*]. That's all they know how to do.

ISRAEL. That's all anybody needs to know how to do—[*Single laugh. Then chorus of laughs off.*] You better follow that laugh back home, boy. You won't find it here. White folks can't laugh like us niggers. They laugh from the middle up. We laugh from the feet up and sideways—[*Low chuckle off.*] They can't laugh like us because all they think about is

workin' and fightin' and makin' money—[Song off left starts "Keep the Home Fires Burning."] And sometimes I think even my wife—don't think o' nothin' but workin' and makin' money.

JIM. But they treat you right, don't they?

ISRAEL. Yes, but you'd miss something. You don't know, what at first. Then—all of a sudden—you'd know. It's that big black laugh you're missing. It ain't nowhere in the white man's world. You'd get hungry for your own kind, boy. You'd eat your heart out to look into a black face and laugh like hell.

[Song. "Home Fires" stops.]

JIM. But you're happy here? [Beat of tom-tom off.]

ISRAEL. Happy? I'll say I'm happy.

JIM. But you're free—free enough to marry one of 'em.

ISRAEL. It wasn't right to marry Lise. I'm sorry for what I've done. Mighty sorry for her. That's what makes me love her so much more. She don't know me. She can't never know me. We're all tangled up, Jim. [Laugh off.] I don't know whose fault it is. You'd better listen to that laugh, boy, and follow it back home. [Luke enters.]

LUKE. Hyar yu niggers! Come over heah! Samba Sarr's doin' a African love dance dat ain't fit fer no ladies ter see. Lawdy! Lawdy! [He exits.]

ISRAEL. Come here, Jim. Forget your troubles. [Crosses to door and calls off.] Give them some room, Boys. [They all enter, Samba in bare feet and stripped to waist, doing war dance with coupe-coupe. Jake beats time on a bucket, in which a tom-tom is inserted, with a wooden spoon. Near end of

dance Major Powell enters from bedroom and appears on balcony.] Major! [The men draw back afraid.]

Major! What you all doin' in that room?

POWELL [to his men]. Get to hell out of here! [They start to exit.] Hear me? You black devils? Get out of here!

TOM [as he starts to door]. Ain't de wah ovah, Maja?

POWELL. None of your back talk. Get out I say!

LUKE [as he starts to door]. Cain't us'ns hab no good time goin' home?

TOM. We ain't hurtin' nobody.

POWELL. You bastards, hear me! I'll give you one minute—to clear out. If you—don't go—then, I'll take the black hide off you! I'll have you lashed—at the post!

[*The men exist—except Jim.*]

ISRAEL. Get out, Jim.

POWELL. You better be movin', nigger!

JIM. Damn you, Major. I'm goin'. Yes, I'm agoin'. But it ain't you I'm going for! No, God damn you. I'm through with you and your damned army. I'm going to stay here in France. I'm gonna desert. Hear me? I'm gonna desert—tonight—see? God damn you and the States.

[*He exits as Major Powell lunges down the steps after him. Then Powell sees Samba.*]

POWELL. Who's that nigger?

ISRAEL. Never mind him. You and me's got something to settle with each other.

POWELL. I haven't got anything to settle with a nigger.

ISRAEL. You got something to settle with a man.

POWELL. Why, you black dog! You're fixing for
the damnedest thrashing a nigger ever got!

ISRAEL. You won't be the one to give it.

POWELL. Don't be too damned sure.

ISRAEL. There ain't anybody . . . black or white . . .
that can lay up with another man's wife and get away
with it.

POWELL. Wife! Why you liar . . . she told me she
wasn't your wife.

ISRAEL. So, you drunk fool—a negro's wife is plenty
good enough for you! [Powell gets *champagne*
glass, *hurls it at Israel*. It misses mark. Samba rushes
at Powell. They fight.] Leave him to me, Samba!
Leave him to me! Samba! C'est mon affaire! Il est
ivre! [Samba throws Powell on table. Then rushes
to table up centre for coupe-coupe. Table is over-
turned. Samba starts toward Powell with coupe-
coupe. Powell picks up chair to defend himself.]
No—not the knife, Samba! Look out, Mister Eddie—look out! [Samba is about to stab Powell when
Israel shoots Samba. Samba turns to Israel.]

SAMBA. Tu m'as tué—sale esclave! [He drops dead as
curtain falls.]

CURTAIN

ACT III

Israel is below table. Major stands with chair still in hands. Samba is lying on floor. A dog can be heard howling in the distance. Powell puts down chair.

POWELL. Boy, we're in a hell of a mess. I don't know how we're going to get out of it. I'm going out to look around. [Exits. Israel crosses to door, terrified.]

ISRAEL. Major! Don't leave me alone, Major! [Getting no answer, he approaches the body of Samba.] Oh, Samba—Samba. I killed my friend. Oh, Samba, I loved you, I loved you. I'm all mixed up. I couldn't help it. Samba, I couldn't help it. Oh, Lord, hide me—hide me in the shadow of your wings. Hear me, Lord, crying in the wilderness. Lean over me, Lord. [He kneels.] Bend down—bend down. Don't let the black gods get me. Oh, Lord, have mercy on me—have mercy!

POWELL [entering]. There wasn't anybody around, but they must have heard that shot. Isn't there some place we can put him?

ISRAEL [pointing to room]. In there.

POWELL. Come on, give me a lift. We can't leave him here. [Israel starts to help him, but falls back in fear.]

ISRAEL. Oh, I can't.

POWELL [drags Samba off, returning at once. He picks up revolver]. Put that gun away. For God's sake, clean that up. [He indicates blood on floor, then picks up hat and coat.] After I'm gone, lock this door and keep it locked. Don't let anyone in—I don't care who it is. Lock the door and keep it locked! I'm going now.

[He exits. Israel crosses and locks door. Lise enters from bedroom on balcony.]

ISRAEL. Oh, Lord—don't let the black gods get me. Oh, Lord, have mercy on me! Have mercy!

[Lise comes toward him.]

LISE. Ask me to have mercy!

ISRAEL. Lise! Lise!

LISE [kicking at him as he reaches toward her with his hands]. Don't touch me wiz your dirty hands!

ISRAEL. Ask the Lord to forgive, Lise!

LISE [taking rag and bucket]. Allez! You seenk I want zee customaires to see zat? [She hands Israel rag to wipe up blood.] Allez! Vite!

ISRAEL. I can't!

[Lise takes rag from him and washes spots up.]

LISE. Ah, canaille. Was it for zis I marry myself to you? You a rich man!

ISRAEL [rising]. Oh God! I wish I was dead.

LISE [rises]. Go keel yourself. Fiche le campe! Oh, là, là.

ISRAEL. Lise!

LISE. Don't call me Lise. I am no more Lise to you. I hate you. I could keel you.

ISRAEL. There's my gun. I wish I was dead.

LISE. I don't want your dirty blood on my hands.

Blood of a nigger!

ISRAEL [*facing her*]. Who told you to call me that?

LISE. He did—your white friend—the Major.

ISRAEL. He was drunk if he told you that.

LISE. Nigger—zat is what you are! Nigger!

ISRAEL. Hell, yes! That's what I am! Nigger! But you've no right to call me that. Only a friend.

LISE. Friends? You? Hi!

ISRAEL. Well, maybe I have no friends and maybe I have no money. I'm poor, all I got is my two black hands . . . but they were good enough to fight for you and save this old café! Where'd you be if it wasn't for my two hands fighting for you?

LISE. Other hands with money will fight for me.

ISRAEL. So! Now I know what you are! You only married me 'cause you thought I was rich. You think I'll take your damned insults? Even a nigger won't stand insults.

LISE [*through following speech*]. Ah, tu me dégoûte, salop! Crapule!

ISRAEL. And when the Major was telling you all this about me, you were trying to get money out of him! You got the Major drunk just to get money out of him!

LISE. Chien de nègre!

ISRAEL. It's you that killed Samba Sarr!

LISE. Nègre:

ISRAEL. You, that made me kill my friend! His blood's on your hands! You—you little French whore! [He makes toward her. She goes toward

door, overturning chair. He stops, realizing what he is doing.]

LISE. Open zat door!

ISRAEL [as she pounds door]. Lise—forgive me. I was mad. Forgive me.

LISE. Open zat door. I go for zee police!

ISRAEL. No! No! I can't open it for you. The Major—he's coming back. He will open it!

LISE [crouching on steps]. Le Major? He comes back?

ISRAEL. Yes—he—he's coming back.

LISE [creeping up stairs]. You go way—tonight.

[She exits to her bedroom, closes door and locks it.]

ISRAEL. I'll go out where it's dark and nobody knows who's black and who's white. [Israel crosses, picks up revolver. He turns toward door, and walks slowly towards it, the door beyond which lies Samba. He opens the door and salutes Samba with hand upraised.] Samba Sarr, you have peace? [Rap on street door. He turns quickly.]

JIM. Let me in! It's me, Pal—Jim! [Israel hurries to door and opens it. Jim rushes in.]

ISRAEL [locking door]. What's the trouble?

JIM. Hide me—hide me quick. They're after me.

ISRAEL. Sure I will! There's a place under the bar. But here—[Israel gets a cognac bottle and glass from bar and offers Jim a drink.] Drink this first—. Here—that'll steady you. Been deserting, eh? It's no fun desertin', Jim.

JIM. I'd 'a' got away only I was scared. Down there by the canal road I ran into two M.P.'s. Maybe if I hadn't run they wouldn't have noticed me. But

I ran. I ran like hell. I—I felt like Joe must have felt with that mob after him. I dodged into a side street and gave 'em the slip. When they passed by—I heard 'em talkin'. I knew they was after me. And they aren't far behind now. [He looks toward door.]

ISRAEL. Jim, I can't let you stay here. You'd better get out—quick!

JIM. Why? What's wrong?

ISRAEL [pointing to door]. Samba Sarr. He's killed—in there! [Lise opens balcony door, then closes it as soon as she sees Jim.]

JIM. The African! The man with the earrings?

ISRAEL. Oh Lord.

JIM. That great big boy from Africa?

ISRAEL. Oh, Lord Jesus!

JIM. He was a man. I didn't think nobody could kill him. Who killed him?

ISRAEL. I did.

JIM. You?—For God's sake—You? You—killed—him?

ISRAEL. Oh, Lord Jesus!

JIM. That man was worth a million of us! No slave's blood in him! And you killed him! What the hell was the matter with you? Can't us niggers stick together nohow?

ISRAEL. Oh Lord!

JIM [opens door, looks in room]. Big old jungle boy lying there like a baby. Danced yourself to death. Danced right up to old man Death an' spit in his eye. [Closes door.] Death wasn't big enough to get you alone—face to face. Had to sneak up on

you—behind an American nigger. What you got to say for yourself, nigger? What did you kill him fer?

ISRAEL. I had to. He'd a killed the Major. I—I got tangled up. In a second I saw all my life back home —just like a drowning man.

JIM. You killed the best man of us all, for a drunken fool.

ISRAEL. Don't be hard on the Major, Jim.

JIM. We're all too soft. We've got more heart than head. That's what's the matter with us. [*Advances to Israel.*] Where is the Major, damn him!

ISRAEL. I don't know. He went out.

JIM. Yeh. Leavin' you to face the music.

ISRAEL. He's comin' back.

JIM. Like hell he is. He's beat it. You won't see him again. He's gone—and he's gone for good. It's up to us now, Pal. They'll be after both of us. We've got to stick together.

ISRAEL. No, Jim. You got to get to camp. There's no use your gettin' mixed up in this for me. This place isn't going to see me no more.

JIM [*following Israel*]. Where you goin'?

ISRAEL. Back where all the black folks came from.

JIM. Back to Africa?

ISRAEL. I'm going fishing with Samba Sarr.

JIM. You mean—you're going—to kill yourself?

ISRAEL. I'm going to buy me a ticket from old man Death.

JIM. Good God, no! You can't! Let's you and me pal around here in France.

ISRAEL. No—that's all over. [*Goes to cash box at bar —gets money and croix de guerre, returning to Jim.*]

I couldn't live here without Lise. She can't understand me and I can't understand her so—I've got to go. [Town clock strikes three.] God! It's late. Jim—here, take the croix de guerre and here's some money—you'll need it. Now I want you to promise me something.

JIM. I'll promise you anything.

ISRAEL [*his hand on Jim's shoulder*]. I want you to go back to the States.

JIM. Ask me anything 'cept that.

ISRAEL. I want to save you a lot of misery.

JIM. I—I can't do that—after what they did to Joe.

ISRAEL. Go back. You can't be happy—living alone—with white folks. White has to live with white and black with black. That's the way the Lord made it. That's the way Deep River flows.

JIM. Maybe that's true. But I can't go back there—I can't! I'd do anything to help you, but that wouldn't be helpin' you.

ISRAEL. I want you to go back to camp, Jim. [*He starts to lead Jim to the door. There is a loud knock. They stop.*]

SLIM [*off*]. Open that door!

ISRAEL. Run to cover, boy. [*Jim hides under bar.*] Qui est là?

SLIM. Never mind, Frenchy. Open that door before I bust it down.

ISRAEL [*calling off.*] C'est fermé, Messieurs.

SLIM [*rattles door*]. Fermé nothin'. Open that door or I'll shoot the lock off! I'll give you three. One—two—three. [*Israel opens door. Slim and Bill enter.*] You got to treat these frogs rough. Maybe

they don't understand but they get your meanin'.
[To Israel.] Say—we're lookin' fer a runaway nigger—you ain't seen him around here?

ISRAEL. Voulez-vous quitter le café?

SLIM. I'll be damned if it ain't the parley-voo nigger.

BILL. Sure—I remember comin' into this place.

SLIM. I recollect—comin' in, but I don't remember goin' out.

ISRAEL. Il faut fermer—Monsieur.

SLIM. Firmer than the rock of Gibraltar and we're going to look around. [Israel gets bottle of cognac.]

ISRAEL [giving them cognac]. Ah—messieurs.

SLIM. We're on duty—but duty has its limitations—
[Drinks.]

BILL. I don't like that nigger's smile. Say—I'll bet he'd shoot you for a nickel.

SLIM. I'd hate to get bumped off going home.

BILL. You said a mouthful.

SLIM. This varnish has got me all pepped up. I'm gonna do my duty and search the place—you stay here. [He goes to door of room and exits.]

BILL. Ask me! Ask me!

SLIM [calling from off]. Bill, it's murder. There's a dead French nigger—

BILL. There is? [Stopping a little afraid.] But dead French niggers don't come under our jurisdiction.

SLIM. Maybe the coon we're after did it. [To Israel.] Say—who killed that man in there?

ISRAEL. Je ne comprend pas.

SLIM. You know anything about that dead man?

ISRAEL. Allez-vous-en.

BILL. What'd he say? I thought he talked English—

SLIM. He might as well be swinging by his tail for all I can understand him.

BILL. Anyway, it's none of our honeymoon. It's a case for the frog cops.

SLIM. Hey, Bill, did you notice the color o' that black man there?

BILL. Yellow.

SLIM. Blue I tell yuh—blue. It's only the whites that turn yellow when they're dead. [*The door of Lise's bedroom is opened. Lise appears and starts down stairs.*] I seen 'em at the front all curled up like yellow leaves. [*Slim sees Lise and goes centre.*] For the love of Mike—if it ain't Mamzelle in person. And a picture! Don't be frightened, lady.

BILL. Jees—she's pretty!

SLIM. Keep your mind on your work.

LISE [on stairs]. Oh Messieurs, you are the police Américain?

SLIM. General Pershing's pets.

LISE [crossing to Slim]. Why are you here, Messieurs?

SLIM. We were trailing a runaway nigger and we found—

BILL. Go easy, Slim. Maybe she don't know.

SLIM. I understand women. I'll break it to her gently. [*Then gruffly.*] Say, do you know there's a dead man in there?

LISE. Yes, Messieurs, I know.

BILL. Maybe you can tell us about the man we're trailing.

SLIM. Yeah. Did you see a short yellow coon in here?

LISE. Oui, Monsieur, I saw heem. He was here just a minute ago.

SLIM [to Bill]. What'd I tell you! [To Lise.] Where'd he go?

LISE. I do not know, Monsieur.

SLIM. Do you know who killed that man in there?

LISE [pointing to Israel]. Zat man zere—he can tell you who keeled heem. Eh, Monsieur du Bois?

SLIM. Why, he don't even speak English.

LISE. He fool you—like he fool everybody.

SLIM [to Israel]. How about it—do you know who killed that man in there?

LISE. Tell him! [Major Powell enters.]

BILL. 'Tention! [The M.P.'s salute.]

POWELL. What are you doing here?

SLIM. We were looking for a runaway nigger and we discovered a murder.

POWELL. So you found that out, eh? Well, you're just too late.

SLIM. We got the goods on the—

POWELL. Shut up! Why didn't you do something about it?

[Slim falls back to side of Bill.]

BILL. Well, we—

POWELL. Shut up! Standing around here like turtle doves. Why she eats little doves like you. If I'd come any later I'd o' found only your tail feathers. [Slim and Bill laugh.] Button your mouth. I'm in charge now—understand? If I need you, I'll call you.

SLIM [to Bill in an undertone]. We ought to show our authority.

POWELL. Beat it, you love birds.

SLIM. Love birds! Frisk me for fleas! [Exit Slim and Bill.]

LISE. Ah, cher Monsieur. I am so glad you came back.
[Colored Corporal enters.]

POWELL. You will oblige me, Madame, by leaving the room.

LISE. Lise would like to talk to you. There is—

POWELL. Go up to your room. [Lise goes upstairs hesitantly, then exits balcony bedroom.]

CORPORAL. The French commander has been notified, Sir, and said he would come right away.

POWELL. All right. [The Corporal exits. Powell turns to Israel.] When I got outside, I realized we could never get away with this, so I slipped back to camp and sent an orderly to the Commandant. He's going to ask questions. So you're to know nothing and keep your mouth shut—understand?

ISRAEL. Don't bother with me, Mister Eddie, I'm not worth it.

POWELL. Not worth it! Why you killed your buddy to save my life. I reckon I'm not that much of a skunk.

ISRAEL. But I had murder in my heart, Mister Eddie. I wanted to kill you and then—all of a sudden—I saw Miss Sally—and you and me and my Mammy. I couldn't see nothing else, then Samba went for you and I—

POWELL. I know. And I'm going to prove—[He checks himself.] How did those M.P.'s get in here?

ISRAEL. They said they'd shoot off the lock.

COMMANDANT [off]. Attention. Sergeant, garde la porte.

POWELL [*to Israel*]. Keep your mouth shut. [Commandant enters, followed by Sergeant and Corporal. They stand at door.]

COMMANDANT [*to Powell*]. Good evening, Major.

POWELL. Good evening, Commandant.

COMMANDANT. I was told a murder has been committed in this café.

POWELL. Yes.

COMMANDANT. When was it done?

POWELL. About an hour ago.

COMMANDANT. Notez tous les détails de la scène, Sergeant. Mettez vos observations sur papier.

SERGEANT. Oui, mon Commandant. [He moves about, making notes.]

COMMANDANT. Where is the body, Major?

POWELL. In that room.

COMMANDANT. Was he killed there?

POWELL. No, he fell right about here, Commandant.

COMMANDANT. The body should not have been removed. [To Corporal.] Cherchez les environs. [Corporal and Sergeant exit. Commandant exits into room.]

POWELL. Remember what I told you—keep your mouth shut. [Commandant enters.]

COMMANDANT. This is very serious—a French soldier. Who shot him?

POWELL. I did.

COMMANDANT. You? Why did you kill him, Major?

POWELL. I prefer not to say.

COMMANDANT. This is a most regrettable occurrence. You have nothing else to say?

POWELL. Not a thing.

COMMANDANT. I regret I must arrest you, Major.

POWELL. That was to be expected. [Commandant looks at revolver, then at Powell.]

COMMANDANT. Give me your gun.

POWELL. I never carry one off duty. [Commandant crosses, picks up revolver from stool and returns to Powell.]

COMMANDANT. Then this—this is not your revolver, Major.

POWELL. Yes—yes—it is.

COMMANDANT. It is of French make. American officers do not carry French weapons. Is that not so?

POWELL. Yes.

COMMANDANT. How did you come by it?

POWELL. It was given to me as a souvenir.

COMMANDANT. A rather unpleasant souvenir. You insist that you shot him?

POWELL. I do.

COMMANDANT. Sergeant, amenez le prisonnier.

ISRAEL. Non-non—Don't arrest him. He didn't do it. I did it. C'est moi qui l'ai tué!

POWELL [at same time]. Keep out of this. Do you hear me? Keep your mouth shut.

COMMANDANT. One moment! Whom am I to believe now!

ISRAEL. I tell you—I did it. Arrest me!

POWELL. He lies.

COMMANDANT. One does not lie in order to be tried for murder, Major.

POWELL. I tell you he lies. I killed him.

COMMANDANT [to Israel]. Where is your wife?

ISRAEL. In her room.

COMMANDANT. Sergeant—la femme est dans cette chambre. Amenez-la ici.

SERGEANT. Oui, mon Commandant. [He goes upstairs to Lise's room and raps on door.]

POWELL. May I speak with you alone?

COMMANDANT. I'm sorry, sir—it's impossible now.

POWELL. But, Commandant, I assure you it is of the greatest importance.

COMMANDANT. I told you it was impossible now! [Lise enters and comes down stairs.] I'm sorry to disturb you, Madame. Our business, however, will not take long, I hope.

LISE. A votre service, Monsieur.

COMMANDANT [indicating Major.] Do you know this man?

LISE. Oui—je le connais.

COMMANDANT. A murder has been committed in your café. This officer and your—your husband both claim to have done it. Do you recognize this revolver, Madame?

LISE. Le revolver—appartient à ce nègre, Monsieur.

COMMANDANT. Qui a tué cet homme?

LISE [pointing out Israel]. C'est lui qui l'a tué. Pour une fois il ne ment pas.

COMMANDANT. Vous l'avez vu tuer?

LISE. Oui, Monsieur. Il a levé son revolver comme ça. C'est fini.

COMMANDANT. C'est tout. Merci.

LISE. Bien, mon Commandant.

COMMANDANT. Sergeant du Bois, you're under arrest.

ISRAEL [Lise starts upstairs and stops. Israel turns to room left his arm raised.] Samba Sarr, you have

peace! [He turns, and exits. The Sergeant follows him.]

POWELL. Commandant—I—

COMMANDANT. Major—I must ask you to remain here—I'll be back in a moment.

POWELL. But I have something important to say.

COMMANDANT [as he exits]. I'll be back in a moment.

[*Lise comes to Powell.*]

LISE. They have taken him away.

POWELL. Go back to your room.

LISE. I—I'm afraid—

POWELL. I don't want you here.

LISE. But—I love you.

POWELL. Don't talk to me. You don't know what love is!

LISE. Before I meet you, eet ees true—I never know what love ees. But now—eet ees love. I nevair feel zees way before—I am frightened. [Powell sits on the table. She kneels.] Always poor—always working hard. I know so little happiness in my life. I don't know what love ees and zen I meet you. And you, you go away. [She rises and embraces him.] Oh, no, no, no! I want you to forget the Lise who was bad—I only want you to remember the Lise who love you. Kiss me—Kiss me! Donnez-moi un doux baiser—que je t'aime—que je t'aime! [Major takes her hands off his arms. Lise backs away from him.] Tell me! Tell me zat you love me too—tell me I mean someseeng to you. Tell me!

POWELL. You mean less than nothing to me.

LISE. Oh—eet ees not true!

POWELL. I'm—I'm telling you the truth. I'm—not drunk.

LISE. Oh, mon adoré. It's not true—it's not true—I love you—Take me wiz you. [Jim enters from behind the bar with revolver. Lise sees revolver and screams.] No—No—No—Oh, mon Dieu! Laisse moi te protéger! [Major Powell throws her off—she dashes to door, but it is held by Guard outside.]

JIM. You got just one minute to live. [Lise steals upstairs and exits.]

POWELL. What do you want to kill me for?

JIM. 'Cause what you did to him. He shot the French nigger to save you—and now they'll hang him—that's what they'll do—so—so I'm going to kill you.

POWELL. And after you've killed me—what then?

JIM. I don't care—Let them string me up! I don't care. [Powell moves toward Jim.] Don't you move—something might happen before you know it.

POWELL. I don't give a damn what happens to me, but you'd better care. They'll be back here in a minute—what's your name?

JIM. My name's—Jim—if it does you any good.

POWELL. Israel's your friend, isn't he? '

JIM. Yes—but that don't mean nothing to you.

POWELL. It means a lot to me. He's my friend too. I've known him a long while. Now—maybe I can help him. But I won't be any use to him—dead.

JIM. You will help him?

POWELL. God knows how—but I'll try!

JIM. You're being on the square with me, a nigger?

POWELL. I give you my word. Now are you ready to help him?

JIM. I'd do anything for him. What can I do?

POWELL. Put that gun away. [Jim pockets revolver. Powell makes out pass.] Here's a pass back to camp.

JIM. No, I can't do that! Israel asked me that, too, but I can't go back to the States!

POWELL. Is that being on the square after you said you'd do anything to help?

JIM. You're right. I'll go.

POWELL. That's a good boy. [Hands Jim pass.] Now get your equipment together.

JIM [putting gun away]. You'll—You'll get Israel off?

POWELL. I will if I possibly can. Here's my hand on it, boy. [He offers hand. Jim takes it, embarrassed.] Good night, Jim.

JIM. Good night, sir. [Salutes, turns and starts to door.]

POWELL. Better hustle! They're searching the neighborhood.

COMMANDANT [off right]. Sergeant! Ne laissez sortir personne.

POWELL [hears Commandant's voice outside]. Look out! [Jim hides against stairs.]

COMMANDANT [enters. Jim exits—Then voice of Sergeant outside "Halt!" Commandant to Major.] This situation is most confusing, Major. I insist that you tell me the truth. You two were like racers running to see who could meet death first.

POWELL. Is it as serious as that?

COMMANDANT. It is murder.

POWELL. But sometimes the man who fires the gun
is not the real murderer.

COMMANDANT. Unfortunately that is often the case.

POWELL. Commandant . . . I am the real murderer.

COMMANDANT. I cannot accept your word alone.

[*Looks at balcony door.*] And his word is cor-
roborated by his wife's testimony.

POWELL. But you can't believe that woman, sir. She
has quarrelled with Israel.

COMMANDANT. What is your interest in this man?

POWELL. He is an American citizen.

COMMANDANT. That doesn't explain it.

POWELL. No, you're right. It's deeper than that.

We were boys together. As far back as I can re-
member, we played together—went fishing, swim-
ming . . . more than once he's pulled me out of the
water . . . Saved my life.

COMMANDANT. And now you're trying to save him!

We have a word for that in France, Major . . .
Camarades.

POWELL. Yes, that's it. We are Camarades. But it's
the first time I ever admitted it . . . Commandant
. . . I want to take Israel home with me.

COMMANDANT. The man has confessed to murder.

POWELL. But I have told you . . . I am the guilty
one.

COMMANDANT. Major . . . would you perjure your-
self to save a Camarade? [*Lise enters from her room,*
comes down stairs.]

POWELL. Why . . . why yes . . . I suppose I would.

COMMANDANT. You see . . . your testimony is of no

value. [Lise starts to exit when Commandant stops her.] Madame, where are you . . . going?

LISE. I cannot stay here, Commandant.

COMMANDANT. Of course, Madame. . . . Was this officer here at the time of the shooting?

LISE. I did not see him.

COMMANDANT. But you said you knew Major Powell.

LISE. I said so, Monsieur . . . but I was mistaken. . . . I don't know him.

COMMANDANT. You must tell me where you are going.

LISE. While these strangers are here, I am going to my sister's . . . Rue de Port . . . going to my own people. [Lise exits and the Commandant waves to Sentry to allow her to pass.]

POWELL. This war has made driftwood of all of us.

COMMANDANT. Yes, poor girl! [Sergeant enters.] Qu'est ce qu'il y a?

SERGEANT. Nous avons trouvé trois soldats noirs—mon Commandant—celui-ci sortait de cette maison. [Waves off to men.] Les autres se cachaient dans une allée. [Tom, Jim and Mose enter, saluting Major.]

COMMANDANT. Are these your men?

POWELL. They are, sir.

COMMANDANT. One of them was caught leaving this house. The others were found hiding in a courtyard. [To Tom, Jim, and Mose.] You were here when this murder occurred?

JIM. No, sir . . . I . . . I wasn't here.

COMMANDANT [to Tom]. Well, were you in this place tonight?

JIM [*looking at Major fearfully*]. Yes . . . yes . . . sir.

COMMANDANT [*To Jim*]. Tell us what happened.

JIM. We were all having a little Jamboree over here. We'd sneaked camp and were afraid Major Powell'd catch us and put us in the guard house . . . so we locked the door and Samba was dancing when all of a sudden . . . [*Jim stops suddenly*.]

COMMANDANT. Well?

JIM. Well . . . all of a sudden . . . a . . . a man started a fight with Israel . . .

COMMANDANT. Then?

JIM. Then we got out.

MOSE. He made us.

COMMANDANT. Was the man one of your group?

JIM. No, sir.

COMMANDANT. How did he get in . . . with the door locked?

MOSE. Why he came right out of that door, up there, sir.

COMMANDANT [*looks from balcony to them*]. Who was he?

[Off-stage "Long Long Trail" begins very softly.]

JIM. I . . . I don't know, sir.

POWELL. Go ahead . . . tell the truth. He wants to save me, sir. I came out of that room . . . and started the fight . . . I was drunk.

COMMANDANT. Did you see the fight?

JIM. No, sir.

COMMANDANT [*to Tom*]. Did you?

TOM. Yes, sir.

COMMANDANT. Where were you?

TOM. Right outside by the door. Major Powell came down. Major Powell yelled at Israel . . . Israel yelled at him. Then Samba went wild and went for the major with a knife.

MOSE. Sho' did!

TOM. Then Israel shot him.

COMMANDANT. That will do. Sergeant . . . Laissez-les partir et amenez le prisonnier ici. [Sergeant exits.]

POWELL [hearing off-stage singing]. Hot foot it!

The outfit's moving.

JIM. All right, sir.

TOM [as he exits]. We'll ketch 'em.

MOSE. We'll make it. [Tom, Jim, and Mose exit.]

COMMANDANT [coming to Powell]. I didn't want to doubt your word, Major, but a life was at stake.

POWELL. What about Israel?

COMMANDANT. The courts would free him. He shot the African in defence of you. [Israel enters right and stands below platform.] But I do not believe one should let what you Americans call red-tape stand between camarades. I will take the responsibility. He may go with you.

POWELL [taking his hand]. Thank you, sir!

ISRAEL. You mean I'm free?

COMMANDANT. Yes, Israel, you are free. [Israel looks at balcony door, then moves up-stage looking at it. Powell stopping and patting Israel on arm.]

POWELL. She's gone, Boy. Better hustle. We've only got ten minutes. [Commandant crosses to Israel and takes his hand.]

COMMANDANT. Wherever you go, remember that

France will always consider you one of her sons.
[Singing louder—All three salute.]

POWELL. Come on, Boy—we're going home!

[Powell puts his arm around Israel's shoulder. They exit together, the Commandant watching them as they go.]

CURTAIN



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